THE TROUBLE WITH 'PRIMITIVISM' IN IBERIAN, LATIN AMERICAN AND OTHER SEMI-PERIPHERAL CONTEXTS

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EDITORS' NOTE

The contentious notion of 'primitivism' remains intrinsically entwined with the discourse of modernity and modernisms. The term was widely used by art critics, artists, and art historians who wrote it into books and museum catalogues. Regardless of the trouble it brings, the concept of 'primitivism' has played a significant role in shaping twentieth-century art history's master narrative.

There are serious problems associated with the concept discussed in this volume. For instance, despite being able to accommodate different ways of understanding what the past has been, or could be, when reenacted in the present, 'primitivism' brought into the fore a crystallised mode of conceiving and using that past. The 'past' may function as a negotiable notion within a 'primitivist' framework. Still, all variables are represented from the perspective of *allochronism*, as anthropologist Johannes Fabian wrote about forty years ago in the book *Time and the Other* (1984). That is, they invariably reinforce the Eurocentric assumption that real time is determined by 'civilised' European and North American time. Resulting from that assumption, a chronological hierarchy was invariably established, distinguishing what supposedly counted as developed and 'civilised', from what was considered underdeveloped and 'primitive'. Within this rationale, 'primitive' objects (or folk, naïve, exotic) were seen as belonging to an undetermined (unmeasurable) past, while 'primitivist' modern art based on their appropriation belonged to the real present time — in other words, primitivism operated the *denial of coevalness*, as mentioned by Johannes Fabian, based on a conception of linear progressive time that was as much at the root of modernity as of its counterpart, colonialism.

Trouble with 'primitivism' goes even further. The concept has its own contradictory story, having been used with opposite meanings. For a long time, it had a derogatory use meant to classify and reject modernity and avant-garde artistic productions from the early twentieth century up to the Nazi 'degenerate' art exhibitions. Yet, partly in response, the concept acquired a positive value, which was much reinforced within avant-garde circles. It embraced multiple manifestations contrary to the bourgeois *status quo* and against conservative and censorial views on modern art and artists. This positive turn can later be traced in art history (upheld by the work of influential art historians such as Robert Goldwater, Ernst Gombrich, or William Rubin) but remained far

from being a shared, consensual perspective. Scholars continued to acknowledge and discuss the trouble with 'primitivism' as part and parcel of modernisms' history and art historical modernist narratives. At the same time, the merits of the concept continued to be highly contested.

Whether we like it or not, the troublesome concept of 'primitivism', along with its associated practices and processes, has played a significant role in the production of twentieth-century Western historiography, and it reflects the geographical and social inequalities inherent in the construction of modernity. That is why we insist that the discussion around the concept should be expanded and deepened, rather than let it fall into oblivion. This book engages in doing so, presenting the network of relations between the Iberian Peninsula and Latin American countries (mainly ex-colonies) as well as other peripheral modernities, as a knot of interchanges yet to be fully explored through the lens of primitivisms, and associated conceptual tools, such as Edward Said's 'orientalism', Marxism's 'alienation', Freud's 'unconscious', as well as 'exoticism', 'fetishisation', etc. Without surprises, the critical approaches to 'primitivism' developed in the transnational and global analysis of modernisms were central to the research and the writing of the contributions to this book.

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The Trouble with 'Primitivism' in Iberian, Latin American and Other Semi-Peripheral Contexts is the third book resulting from the *Iberian Modernisms and the Primitivist Imaginary* (PTDC/ART-HIS/29837/2017) research project, coordinated by Joana Cunha Leal and Mariana Pinto dos Santos and co-financed by COMPETE 2020, Portugal 2020 and European Union (European Fund for Regional Development).

The project's first book was published in 2023 by the Art History Institute, marking the 100th anniversary of the multifaceted Portuguese artist Ernesto de Sousa. His early approach to African arts as a curator and art critic were discussed in this open access book, entitled *Ernesto de Sousa 1921-2021: uma criação consciente de situações / uma situação consciente de criações.*

The second book appeared a year later, becoming one of the project's main outputs. The open-access volume *The Primitivist Imaginary In Iberian And Transatlantic Modernisms* was published by Routledge/Taylor & Francis. It explored core expressions of 'primitivism' in Iberian and Transatlantic modernisms, taking into account politics, history and aesthetics. Ten case

studies were thoroughly discussed, highlighting the significance of both the circulations and exchanges connecting the Iberian and Latin American artistic and literary milieus (among themselves and with Parisian circles), as well as the patterns and paradoxes introduced by local implications and the cosmopolitan drive of primitivist manifestations.

The book we are now publishing deepens and expands with further contributions the main results of the three-day international conference *The Trouble With Primitivism: Uses of the Past in Iberian and Transatlantic Modernisms*, which took place in Lisbon in May 2022. A wide range of scholars discussed the uses of the past and the myths of origins implicated in the concept of 'primitivism', as well as its operability in Spanish, Portuguese, Latin American, and other semi-peripheral contexts.

It complements the 2024 Routledge volume with further significant studies that demonstrate the need for continuing questioning and criticism of the concept of 'primitivism.'

The Trouble with 'Primitivism' in Iberian, Latin American and Other Semi-Peripheral Contexts engages with several theoretical understandings and criticisms of the term 'primitivism,' while examining its performativity, prejudices, and limitations through different case studies. The book includes ten chapters organised alphabetically by the first name of their author.

Carlos Bártolo authors the first chapter, discussing how folk culture was brought to light by Portuguese ethnographers in the nineteenth century, and later by modern artists, and how it impacted the visual culture and promoted the fascist regime's cultural industry. Bártolo's primary focus of discussion is the paradox implied in promoting a modern image of the nation that was unwilling to discard the identitarian roots found in regional folklore.

Dunia Roquetti's chapter leads us to Brazilian modernism. Arguing that the early twentieth-century debate opposing pro-figurative and pro-abstract painting exceeds the limits of the artistic sphere, Roquetti analyses the role played by the art critic and writer Mário de Andrade. His defence of a 'figurative Brazilianness' is discussed along with the historiographical interpretations Andrade's thought has prompted.

In chapter 3, Emilio Escoriza examines the notions of primitivism, folklore, and modernism operating in Granada (Spain) from the 1920s up until the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. Escoriza particularly discusses the Granadian cultural group *El Rinconcillo,* to which both the poet Federico García Lorca and the composer Manuel de Falla made significant contributions. At the heart of this chapter lies the work of the multifaceted artist

Hermenegildo Lanz. The author analyses how his praise of 'primitivism' is a basis for innovation and an opportunity to elucidate the complex challenges of peripheral modernisms.

Spanish modernisms are also tackled in Javier Cuevas del Barrio's text. The author reopens the discussion on 'primitivism' and Canarian modernism, bringing Guanche material culture reinterpretations into the fore. Within this framework, Canarian contributions to global surrealism are analysed by discussing the virtues of new theoretical and methodological tools such as the concept of 'psychogeology' created by the poet Domingo López.

In chapter 5, Mário de Andrade's work is again discussed. João Albuquerque specifically discusses how the Brazilian writer's poetic, narrative and essayistic works from the 1920s put forward a notion of 'primitivism' that was foundational for the development of Brazilian modernisms. Albuquerque particularly analyses how Andrade dealt with the national-cosmopolitan binomial, racial issues, and romantic ideals, while eventually arguing that the decolonising use of the concept Andrade advocates significantly reinforced 'primitivism's' cosmopolitan dimension.

Maria José Marcondes' chapter discusses cultural displacements, migrations, and transfers across the Atlantic Ocean. Marcondes focuses on both the reception of European modernisms and avant-gardes in Latin American art, as well as the incorporation of pre-Hispanic art into contemporary artistic production. The mural created by the Mexican artist and architect Juan O'Gorman for the Central Library building at the National Autonomous University of Mexico is considered a key piece to discuss the nuances of 'primitivism' in Latin American contexts.

In her chapter, Mariana Pinto dos Santos analyses Portuguese futurist manifestos, highlighting the primitivist trope of a 'return to origin' as well as the parody some of them engage in, and how they sometimes expressed a child-inspired performativity. Her discussion elucidates the interrelation between these manifestos and the context of Portuguese politics, particularly the tensions associated with the country's participation in the Great War.

In chapter 8, Noemí de Haro García and Mar Alberruche Rico study the ways in which the prism of 'primitivism' was used in officially-sanctioned textual and visual discourses of the 1940s about cave-dwellings in Almería (Spain). The text discusses the process by which the negative conception of the primitive-as-a-threatening-degenerate evolved into a positive image of the primitive-as-the-picturesque-popular, arguing that it partakes in the successful use the arts and aesthetics to impose the order of the New State established after the Spanish Civil War.

In her chapter, Petra Šarin studies the shaping of the Yugoslav art history discourse during the 1950s and 1960s on peasant-art that emerged in 1930s Croatia. By analysing the notions of 'peasant', 'primitive', and 'naïve' art, the author aims to re-evaluate how these concepts were formulated, used, and instrumentalised. Šarin also discusses the (intentionally) omitted nuances and specificities of interwar peasant-art, applying methodologies based on Marxist feminist and social art history.

Finally, Sarah Poppel focuses on the significance of what art critic Mário Pedrosa named 'virgin art', and how it provided a liberating trigger that, in the Brazilian context, allowed the transgression from a canonically established, figurative conception of art to a new, previously unaccepted, abstract understanding.

Throughout the book, the authors use the terms 'primitive' and 'primitivism' with or without quotation marks or italics, depending on the context. We have decided to respect the way each author decided to refer to these terms.

The editors would like to thank all authors for their patience in waiting for the publication of this volume, as well as the support of the Art History Institute at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of NOVA University.

THE DISREGARDED 'PRIMITIVE' WITHIN: ETHNOGRAPHY, MODERNISM, DESIGN, INTERIORS, AND POLITICS IN MID-TWENTIETH-CENTURY PORTUGAL

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses the 'discovery' of disregarded vernacular culture both by the ethnographers working in the late nineteenth century and, a few years later and for different reasons, by the modernist generation. The attention successively given to vernacular culture triggered a wider process of reappraisal of this universe, with significant consequences during the authoritarian *Estado Novo* regime, as it would oxymoronically appropriate folk art and vernacular references via design agencies in order to create an idealistic image of the nation as a modern state established upon its traditional roots. Eventually, a new style for home decoration illustrating the ideals of the regime was developed.

INTRODUCTION

One of the features that seem to steer the behaviour of a significant part of the Portuguese upper classes is, usurping Foteini Vlachou's definition, a sense of "provincial cosmopolitanism[1] – where valorising the art of the centre over that of the periphery, especially if the latter happens to be one's country of origin, is mistaken for a sign of open-mindedness and progress"(Vlachou, 2019: 340). Because of this, Portuguese elites understood the country as 'belated',[2] now appropriating Mariana Pinto dos Santos' mention about how the notion of advance in civilisation put forward the idea of Portugal's decadence after the period of its glory age.[3]

These antinomic concepts of progress—or 'civilised'—and of uneducated—or 'primitive'—illustrate Portugal's relationship with itself and with other countries. It also vehemently illustrates opposing poles regarding its society strata: the elites and the peasants, as considered by the former.

As Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten have pointed out, the term 'primitive' should not be understood as a category in itself but as part of a relationship. It opposes the 'civilised', creating a duality whereby one term cannot be assumed without the other. As a Western ideological construct, this relationship can be analysed from different perspectives: time/space, gender, race, and class (Antliff & Leighten, 2003: 217-231).

In this chapter, it should be seen how this duality was rehabilitated. If foremost, it was based on a 'class' relationship between the 'primitive' anonymous people and the 'civilised' economic, intellectual, or national power elites[4] – for whom the term 'primitive' had a depreciative value. Later on – especially from the 1930s onwards –, it was established through a dignified perspective based on 'time', justifying the 'civilised' contemporary

[1] Vlachou used the term to introduce the writings viewpoint of the critic and art historian José-Augusto França in her essay "Why Spatial? Center and Periphery as Temporal Terms" (Vlachou, 2019: 333-352).

[2] About *belatedness* as definer of the Portuguese critical thought from Antero de Quental to França, see Pinto dos Santos, 2019: 37-64.

[3] This tendency would emerge from the period of the Iberian Union (1580-1640) onwards, promoted by the country's transient sense of independence loss under the Spanish crown and the ensuing struggle to be understood as an equal in the prominent ruling empires of the Western world, as referred by Antero de Quental in 1871, see Pinto dos Santos, 2019: 45-47.

[4] Also acknowledging the urban 'space' as the main territory of the elites and the countryside, or suburbia, as the space of the anonymous people.

political present on a now noble, mythical 'primitive' past, until then preserved in the rural universe.

As a country economically reliant on the primary sector, from medieval agriculture and the colonial sugar monoculture – after the brief commercial entrepreneurship during the Expansion Period richness – to the prosperous extraction of gold and diamonds from Brazil, Portugal did not keep up with other economies in terms of goods manufacture and the industrial transformation of raw materials, developed throughout Europe since the seventeenth-century.[5] Nevertheless, modern society's growing dependence on industrial production would promote an ever-increasing mass importation of all kinds of commodities from these manufacturing countries. The tide of foreign industrial consumer goods would soon be understood as causing a wider detachment from home-grown reality while at the same time prompting an eagerness for things and tastes imported from countries where 'progress' had putatively been achieved, even acknowledging the adjustment of these 'foreign' influences on materials, technologies, themes and even habits of the Portuguese society.

Indeed, the situation was acknowledged and duly noted as far back as the seventeenth century when – upon seeing the development of the *Manufactures Royales* of Louis XIV by Jean-Baptiste Colbert – Duarte Ribeiro de Macedo, secretary to the ambassador to the court in Paris, wrote about the need, and failure, in implementing similar organisations in Portugal. In his words, "this was helped by the vulgar error whereby we believe that everything that comes from abroad is the best" (Ribeiro de Macedo, 1817: 89).[6] Many years later, in the twentieth century, and following many political attempts to correct the problem, José Leite de Vasconcelos maintained the same judgement, thereby justifying the maintenance of the Portuguese Ethnographic Museum: "The unfamiliarity with the country, and therefore the lack of a national conscience, leads artists to be inspired by foreign ideas [...] finally implying that everyone will always prefer to what is ours, what comes from abroad, even when it is not the best" (Leite de Vasconcelos, 1915: 14).[7]

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[5] About the failed implementation of industry in Portugal, see Borges de Macedo, 1963.

[6] ["Para isto ajudou o ordinario erro, com que entendemos que tudo o que vem de fóra he o melhor"].

[7] ["O desconhecimento do país, e portanto a falta de consciência nacional, faz que os artistas se inspirem em obras estrangeiras [...] faz finalmente que todos prefirão sempre ao que é nosso o que vem de fóra, ainda quando este não é melhor"].

In Portugal, the first more widespread glimpses upon 'itself' were promoted by the growing awareness of the concept of 'Nation', developed throughout the politically unstable Europe of the nineteenth century.[8] Of course, this awareness would not be exclusive to the Portuguese. However, in Portugal, expressions of nationalism would be particularly intensified by several factors: the crisis caused by the political instability that followed the implementation of a constitutional monarchy during the 1820s; the major loss of economic power following the independence of Brazil in 1822 and the absence of convincing industrial growth; and the awareness of a shrinking colonial empire in the face of the growing trade empires of other nations.[9] All these conditions were eventually aggravated by the extreme indignation caused by the British ultimatum crisis of 1890, during which both empires disputed the territories in-between the Portuguese African colonies of Angola and Mozambique, resulting in Portugal being forced to withdraw its intentions.[10]

THE BIRTH OF A NEW DISCIPLINE: THE PORTUGUESE ETHNOGRAPHY

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, nationalist enthusiasm and the effects of a newly developed Portuguese historiography recalled an army of historic heroes responsible for the triumphs that secured and expanded the nation. Represented as mythical figures, these heroes called for national pride and rejoicing. This circumstance had its most visible result in staging several commemorations of the nation's glorious past.[11] Moreover, this romantic and patriotic vision of 'itself' would be at the onset of the first local ethnographic studies responsible for the first observations about the 'Other' that lived within, about the 'existent ancestors' of the Portuguese. The focus of the first scholars working in this field, such as Adolfo Coelho (1847-1919), Teófilo Braga (1843-1924), Consiglieri Pedroso (1851-1910), and José Leite de

[8] For a comparative analysis of the different approaches to the concepts of nation and nationalism and their application to the Portuguese case, see Sobral, 2003: 1093-1126.

[9] For a broader study of 19th century Portugal, see Torgal and Roque, eds., 1993.

[10] About the Ultimatum crisis, see Ramos, 1993: 37-39.

[11] In the last decades of the nineteenth century, successive commemorations would be celebrating historical centenaries: the deaths of Camões and the Marquis of Pombal in 1880 and 1882, the birth of Prince Henry the Navigator in 1894 and Vasco da Gama's arrival in India in 1898.

Vasconcelos (1858-1941), concentrated on the analysis of language and on what nowadays could be called 'immaterial culture' through studying folk songs, adages, proverbs, rites, and traditions. Influenced by the *Geração de 70* ['70s Generation],[12] these early ethnographers believed in regenerating the country along with its intellectual life.[13]

Before the end of the nineteenth century, the first reports were made about material outputs produced by anonymous people, such as architecture and everyday objects. Of these, it is relevant to mention the search for an original and autochthonous type of Portuguese House [*Casa Portuguesa*] – discussed ever since an article by Henrique das Neves appeared in the press in 1893 and was debated for many years.[14] The studies published in 1900 about the ceramic production of Prado, in Barcelos, a small town in the north of Portugal, by the ethnographer Rocha Peixoto are also significant examples.[15] For the most, these studies kept on putting forward a distanced analysis of material culture, written through the putatively superior judgment of euro-centred cultivated scholars that acknowledge it as the work of the 'vulgar.' When household objects were discussed in these occasional studies focusing on specific themes like geography, typology, or technology, they were not related

[12] The *Geração de 70* was a group of intellectuals and academics centred in the university city of Coimbra who, in various cultural areas from literature to politics, idealised the possibility of regenerating the country through its modernisation, bringing it closer to the standards of the European cultural centres. Years later, disillusioned by their intentions' failure, some would call themselves *Vencidos da Vida* [Losers of Life]. About the development of this group of intellectuals, see Ramos, 1992: 483-528.

[13] For an understanding of the Portuguese ethnography development from its inception until the first decade of the 20th century, see Leal, 2000: 29-34, 40-44.

[14] The discussion would focus primarily on defining formal building characteristics that distinguished original typologies based on climate and landscape. The definition of these formal typologies would be central to creating an official architectural language by the dictatorial regime decades later. The "question of the Portuguese House" is discussed through the viewpoint of arquitecture in Garcia Ramos, 2010: 229-259; and as a case study on ethnographic studies in Leal, 2000: 107-143.

[15] Rocha Peixoto, also an archaeologist, was one of the first to carry out his work according to evolutionist bases, founded on research done *in locu*, highlighting the past as a stage of evolution and not as an ethnic background. The peasant, referred to by Peixoto as primitive, rough and boorish [*primitivo*, *rude* or *boçal*], was thus seen as a "kind of 'modern primitive,' [in] constant analogies between the 'modern' folk customs and the prehistoric populations", see Leal, 2000: 44. ["uma espécie de 'primitivo moderno' [...] onde são constantes analogias entre os costumes populares 'modernos' e as populações pré-históricas"]

in a consonant way, be it among themselves or by considering their context of production, uses and importance in people's everyday lives.

Nevertheless, the results of these studies became visible in the Portuguese cultural and scientific milieus through articles published in specialised journals. In the beginning of the twentieth century, digest references to this realm gradually appeared in the general press, reaching a wider public. Moreover, the final decades of the nineteenth century had also seen the first experiments in ethnographic and anthropological museology, both as a result of thematic exhibitions and through setting up ethnographic collections such as that of the Oporto Industrial and Commercial Museum, curated by Joaquim de Vasconcelos (operating between 1883-1899) and that of the Portuguese Ethnographic Museum curated by Leite de Vasconcellos in Lisbon in 1893.[16]

THE 'PRIMITIVE' REALM

Ethnographers' attention increased interest in this vernacular world in other enlightened figures of the Portuguese cosmopolitan elites, from the aristocracy to the flourishing bourgeoisie (Pina Cabral, 1991: 15-17). Vernacular artefacts[17] were bought as *objects d'art* or 'primitive' pieces and used to furnish summer or country houses, some now built under the influence of the recently 'discovered' *Casa Portuguesa.*[18] These objects of the

[16] The first had ethnographic objects paired with industrially produced ones following the path of the industrial and applied arts museums as a didactic complement to the development of these areas, emerging throughout Europe, see Coutinho, and Leandro, 2016; the second was created as a consequence of the anthropologic studies recently developed. As a museum devoted to discovering the Portuguese People, it would join the ethnographic findings to archaeological collections (nowadays, the National Museum of Archaeology), see Gouveia, 1997.

[17] Mainly ceramics (useful ware and figurines), textiles (tapestries, embroideries, weaving cloth), wood (furniture pieces and work tools), and metal work (forged iron, copper, and brass tools and utensils), etc.

[18] A paradigmatic example is the construction of Casa de São Bernardo, Count of Arnoso house at Cascais, the royal court's summer retreat by the sea. The Count – an army officer engineer, king's private secretary and one of the *Vencidos da Vida* – designed and built, between 1890 and 1902, his own house, based on rural constructions of the country's north, in clear contrast with the chalets and villas built by his contemporaries. See Quintão, 2011: 6-23; and Henriques da Silva, 2011: 84-91.

On the walls of Casa de São Bernardo dining rooms, useful ware pieces in glazed clay and jugs and ewers in copper of folk provenance were proudly displayed, see Lino, 1927: 31.

peasant world were collected but never used by their new owners. Their crude qualities were too unappealing to be actually used by the sophisticated contemporary social elites. So, they were displayed on walls and shelves, elegantly complementing objects and furniture of different contemporary styles.

During the 1910s, the 'primitiveness' of local production – in its 'rough and naive purity', as it was put by then[19] – would begin to be a source of inspiration for a thriving generation of modernist artists, following paths opened at the end of the nineteenth century. These artists discovered vernacular artefacts in their natural habitat, that is, local markets and county fairs, where they continued to be modestly traded by the people who produced and used them daily. Such is the case of a small group of artists gathered around the Delaunay couple on their brief stay in Vila do Conde – a small city in northern Portugal – between 1915 and 1916, running from the war horrors.[20] These would include the American Samuel Halpert and a small circle of Portuguese friends, some of them acquaintances from Paris: Eduardo Viana, Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso, José Pacheko and Almada Negreiros. As Sonia Delaunay would say,

> [Portugal was] a world apart. White houses, a dazzling white against a distant backdrop of ultramarine blue ocean, [...] in the dazzling sunlight, the colours of the shawls, the clothes of the women, the bronzed tones, dark green watermelons, their bright red insides fading into pink. I was intoxicated by the colours and started painting right away, just like [Robert] Delaunay and our Portuguese companion, Eduardo Viana (Vasconcelos, 2015: 197).

These artists would delight in the bright costumes used by peasants, in the motives for decorating their tools and daily objects, and in the shapes and graphic motives of the colourful ceramic ware, objects, and toys studied by Rocha Peixoto no more than a decade ago. The bold use of solid and luminous colours through rich contrasts; the decorative geometric rhythms painted or engraved on wood, horn, or cork; the primary forms of the bi- or three-dimensional representations of human and animal figures; even the naïf bestiary presented in several of these objects were acquainted with the outputs flowing from the most recent artistic research done by artists from the modern generation throughout Europe.

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[19] This kind of attributes can be found in many period texts referring to the production or its creators, as in the mentioned Rocha Peixoto essay.

[20] About this exceptional encounter and its outputs, see Cunha Leal, 2018, and the exhibition catalogue Vasconcelos, coord., 2015.

> The pottery, crockery and dolls of Barcelos formed a visual link between himself [Robert Delaunay], Sonia and Amadeo [Souza Cardoso], as it was an interest in folk elements that marked their respective work and was an open question in the kind of modernism that they advocated, as they searched for a deep connection between art and life. [...] In this context, the popular [folk] takes the place of the "primitive", or, as Margarida Mafra puts it succinctly, "the rounded shapes of the pumpkins and regional costumes were to Orphism what the angular noses and the chins of African marks were to early Cubism". [...] The theme of dolls – which featured in Sonia Delaunay's 'Portuguese toys' series [...] and the rag dolls that Amadeo used as models for his paintings [...] – corresponded to an interest shared by the three artists, who used them as modernist objects, allowing an intriguing splitting of senses between the inanimate and the living, and between a traditional item currently in use and its visual depiction through erudite painting (Vasconcelos, 2015: 198-200).

These 'exotic' objects had the same enchantment that, all over the Western world, the international avant-garde generation was discovering in African, Mesoamerican, or Oriental artefacts, but also within their local folklores. This *disregarded 'primitive' from within* – meeting the childish, pre-historic, or non-European tribal 'primitives' – was now comprehended in a more considerate way by these artists as another real counter-measure to the dull classical ubiquity taught and perpetuated through the official Beaux-Arts structure. Presenting them through a more figurative manner, as Halpert or Viana, or appropriating just colours, shapes, rhythms, and motives, like Amadeo, the Delaunays, or, again, Viana, this group found in these toys and artefacts the innocent eye of Men, that is, a purity and authenticity not yet stained by the corruption of modern civilisation and the dogmas of 'post-renaissance European' artistic culture.

A NEW ETHNOGRAPHIC PERCEPTION

During the Portuguese First Republic (1910-1926), and contrary to the defeatist views of ethnographers at the turn of the century, the discipline developed a gleeful discourse on the Portuguese people, which was an apparent result of the new political establishment and the fresh patriotic hopes in the country's resurgence that came with it (Leal, 2000: 56-57).

> We think we have gone back a few centuries, so complete is the whole atmosphere of that life, collected and simple, that characterises the Alentejo People; so strong is the evocative power of old things,

> when we feel them; so vivid are, still today, the reminiscences of a strong and proud race (Pessanha, 1917: 178). [21]

The study of the Portuguese people's roots by a generation of new scholars[22] – like Leite de Vasconcelos' collaborators Vergílio Correia and Luiz Chaves, and Sebastião Pessanha or Augusto César Pires de Lima – turned to the compilation and analysis of folk culture, almost exclusively understood through its artistic and material productions, the so-called *artes populares*.[23]

This new trend in ethnography, now designated as 'artistic ethnography', became more visible to the general public as the collaboration between ethnographers, photographers, and artists grew. Its visibility rested on the publication of their short and assertive essays, predominantly descriptive and profusely illustrated, focusing mainly on the aesthetic value of the objects and their appreciation, once again to the detriment of their use and production context. This aesthetised gaze extended to areas other than crafts, such as work activities, which would, therefore, be objectified. Moreover, during this period, a regionalist perception of the country expanded as the local scale became these scholars' primary analysis level. However, regional diversity was seen as the result of an iterated national identity consistently reinforced in elegiac texts, where regionally produced objects were re-identified as a product of Portugal's uniqueness. This kind of awareness of folk arts led to the 'reinvention' of some declining skills and manufactures during the first half of the century, the rebirth of the Arraiolos carpets and the Castelo Branco embroideries standing as major examples of this recovery.[24]

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[21] ["Julgamos ter retrocedido alguns seculos, tão completo é todo o ambiente d'essa vida, recolhida e simples, que caracteriza o alentejano; tão forte é o poder evocador das coisas velhas, quando as sentimos; tão vivas são, ainda hoje, as reminiscências d'uma raça forte e altiva"] Alentejo is a main district in the South of Portugal.

[22] This generation was born mainly through the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

[23] The use of the term *popular* instead of folk/folklore – especially, a few years later, by the *Estado Novo* regime – could be understood under its double meaning in Portuguese. In addition to the original etymological definition 'of relating or belonging to the People' (from the Latin *populus*), it also means, as in English, 'of or relating to the general public; adapted to or indicative of the understanding and taste of the majority, frequently encountered or widely accepted; commonly liked or approved', which would intend the aim of turning this 'popular' (folk) arts into a form of popular culture. Thus, when referencing its use by the regime, we have maintained the term *popular* within single inverted commas.

[24] The Arraiolos carpets were the focus of a Sebastião Pessanha's investigation that ended with an exhibition and article published in 1917, see Pessanha,

Ethnographers' attention to folk arts would slowly permeate society. Awareness of this longstanding heritage would grow exponentially among the general public through its widespread dissemination over the mainstream media in articles published in illustrated magazines, advertisements, posters, music and theatre presentations. From the mid-1920s onwards, the *Revue* theatre did not have a show without an act that was the consequence of a modernist appropriation of folk themes – be it on costumes, set design, advertising, or even choreography and music – following the legacy of the Slavic folklore dance pieces created by Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* one decade before (Pavão dos Santos, 2000).[25] These appropriations would be announced as both traditional and modern. Indeed, they acknowledged their grounds on the people's primordial traditions but were simultaneously viewed as a revolutionary new artistic possibility (Bártolo, 2016). In a less radical mode than the Delaunay circle's experiences, a younger generation of artists – fluent in diverse artistic areas – was engaging with the same kind of vernacular sources in the different artistic fields in which they operated, putting forward the concept of the arts' union for the benefit and appreciation of all.

A NEW STATE

However, at the end of the 1920s, another occurrence would change the general and official attitude toward folk culture. On May 28, 1926, a military *coup d'état* would end the Portuguese Republic's faint attempts to maintain a democratic regime. After an unstable beginning, the new regime found its pace and economic stability under António Oliveira Salazar's authority.[26] With the ratification of the 1933 Constitution, Salazar would secure his position as a dictator, balancing out the different factions of the Portuguese far right, from the conservatives to the 'pro-fascists', all under the umbrella of a single-party authoritarian regime.[27]

From the outset, the regime's ideological values promoted a policy of deep isolationism that expressed the conservative

1917. About the Castelo Branco embroideries' reenacting see Alves, 2010. In both cases, local crafts schools appeared to promote the tradition.

[25] The *Ballets Russes* performed in Lisbon in 1918, to the delight of the modernist generation.

[26] An academic invited in 1928 to be the all-powerful Minister of Finance gradually secured prominent roles in the government until he ascended to Prime Minister in 1932, ruling Portugal until 1968.

[27] For a broader study of the Estado Novo, see Rosas, 1994.

and reactionary standards on which it was founded. A profound scepticism about contemporary modernity arose, affecting not only the perception of a modern world controlled by the ruthless laws of capitalism but also the increasing fear of communism. All these ideas interwove as a bundle and were frequently perceived as one indistinct 'corrupt' foreign influence (Rosas, 1989: 98-114). This attitude was especially favoured by the ruler, Salazar, a somewhat non-charismatic and reluctant crowd-pleaser who, through a carefully crafted stoic celibate *persona*, would be regarded as carrying out the divine duty of fathering the country, giving up his personal freedom and happiness in the name of the Nation (Costa Pinto, 2006).

Like so many of its analogous contemporary regimes, in order to promote this nationalist path, the regime sought specific elements in the country's roots that would allow it to formulate a 'new' nation. These should be distinct from foreign models or those used before by previous regimes, a fact demonstrated in the paradigmatic choice of its own designation: *Estado Novo* [New State]. The designation, by itself, reveals the oxymoronic duality of the regime: if, on the one hand, it was necessary to be modern, affirming the effort to construct a 'new' up-to-date 'state' – a necessary change from the recent liberal past considered 'decadent' and underdeveloped –, on the other hand, the regime should also proclaim the nation's primordial values as the bedrock for the rebirth of a much desired 'new' state, as in the palingenetic sense defined by Roger Griffin (1996: 12-13).[28]

STAGING A 'VIRGILIAN PEOPLE'

Therefore, a new 'ideal of the Portuguese man' was moulded on the bonhomous peasant's traditional world, symbolising these sanctioned principles.[29] Antonio Ferro, operating as head of the regime's cultural policy, broadly described the Portuguese in a speech: "We have a simple appearance; we are people still living in a Virgilian, pastoral phase. And Salazar is the shepherd of these good and simple people...".[30] The romanticised gentle rural

[28] About how Griffin's theories apply to the Portuguese architecture's case see Brites, 2021: 225-245.

[29] About the use of the peasant realm as the aesthetic model of the Portuguese People, see Alves, 2013.

[30] António Ferro — a journalist and writer associated with the Portuguese and European modernist milieu, while simultaneously a fervent admirer of authoritarian regimes, would head the SPN between its formation in 1933 and

worker – honest, catholic, family-driven, and happily settled in its humble social stratus – was thus glorified as the opposite of the fierce urban factory worker – sceptic, ambitious, cosmopolitan, a revolutionary believer of the 'Bolshevik' world.

To achieve the regime's objectives, an official propaganda organ, *Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional-SPN* [Secretariat of National Propaganda, later National Secretariat of Information], was created in 1933 with the double task of supervising the country's image beyond frontiers and, inside them, to indoctrinate the people about the principles that founded the regime. To achieve this, a set of proselytisation strategies were implemented – the most influential being those developed during the first two decades of the *Estado Novo* era – following an aesthetic and cultural agenda entitled *Política do Espírito* [Policy of the Spirit], formulated one year before by its director: the aforementioned Antonio Ferro. This 'policy' consisted of a programme that established culture as one of the Nation's cornerstones, promoting an organic vision of the new society and the regeneration of the national soul (Melo, 2001: 54-58).

> After all, the premeditated, conscious development of Art and Literature is as necessary to the progress of a nation as the development of its sciences, public works, industry, commerce, and agriculture. No doubt, nations may live inwardly from these necessary activities, but they live outwardly, above all, from the projection of their soul, from the personality of their writers and artists [...]. People who do not see, do not read, do not hear, do not vibrate, and do not get out of their material life of the Must and Have become useless and bad-tempered people (Ferro, 1932).[31]

This effort ended up operating as a way to attain the celebration of this 'Virgilian people' in practically all artistic fields. Towards this goal, the SPN would develop numerous activities, including the creation of an ethnographic collection shown in Portugal and abroad, in which the significant task of presenting the country in various events and media rested. This collection was shown in

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1949 — quoted in "Nova Pousada de Turismo," *Voz* [newspaper] (Lisboa), Aug. 25, 1943. ["Temos uma fisionomia singela, somos um povo que vive ainda numa fase virgiliana, pastoral. E Salazar é bem o pastor desse povo bom e simples..."]

[31] ["O desenvolvimento premeditado, consciente, da Arte e da Literatura é tão necessário, afinal, ao progresso duma nação como o desenvolvimento das suas ciências, das suas obras públicas, da sua indústria, do seu comércio e da sua agricultura. As nações podem viver, interiormente, sem dúvida, dessas necessárias actividades, mas vivem exteriormente, acima de tudo da projecção da sua alma, da personalidade dos seus escritores e dos seus artistas. [...] Um povo que não vê, que não lê, que não ouve, que não vibra, que não sai da sua vida material, do Deve e Haver, torna-se um povo inútil e mal humorado."]

1935 in an "expo-fair of Portuguese 'popular' life and art" at the Galerie Moos in Geneva, Switzerland, during the *Quinzaine du Portugal*, a Portuguese cultural festival. Held on the occasion of an assembly of the League of Nations, it was the grand debut of the Secretariat in actions to promote the regime abroad by showing, as the poster stated, *L'Art, La Musique, Le Cinéma, La Danse, Le Folklore, La Vie au Portugal D'Aujourd'Hui* [Art, Music, Cinema, Dance, Folklore, Life in Portugal Today].[32]

The following year, the exhibition was replicated in Lisbon, where President Carmona and Prime Minister Salazar were present at different opening events. The compilation and research sought to disclose the relationships connecting all artefacts – objects, utensils, and tools –, calling attention to the intrinsic beauty found in their decorations, but again forgetting the functional purpose of their original design – rarely mentioned – and praising the care and effort put in their production by their authors. These were invariably seen as anonymous entities, part of the collective mythical people. From what is understood from the catalogues and exhibitions' photographs, the objects' arrangement did not correspond to any geographical, typological, material, or production logic. Instead, they were distributed in small groupings and kept according to harmonious compositions (fig. 1). The exhibitions were simply the result of combinations seeking the best decorative effect, with everything proclaimed an innocent output, a continuous live creation since primaeval times:

> Let us enter the room that evokes Portugal. Nothing is more suggestive for those who want to know the World and the work of Man than the thought materialised in the 'popular' arts. Moreover, in this collection of objects made by the Portuguese, following the teachings of tradition freely received through the centuries - centuries of Portuguese tradition - we clearly feel the human effort made to succeed in satisfying, practical and aesthetically, the requirements of life. No one has pretended to make an ethnographic exhibition in this room. Far from it! It would need a scientific, methodical, and museological character lacking here to achieve such an objective. The idea was to make one of the vibrations of the Portuguese soul palpable (Chaves, 1935: 1).[33]

[32] Photograph of the poster in Genève streets at Fundação António Quadros archives, Lisboa (Arquivo AFC, caixote 10a, album 2, img 004).

[33] ["Entrons dans la salle qui évoque le Portugal. Rien de plus suggestif pour celui qui veut connaître le Monde et l'œuvre de l'Homme, que la pensée matérialisée dans les arts populaires. Et dans cette réunion d'objets fabriqués par le peuple portugais qui suit les enseignements de la tradition librement reçue à travers les siècles – siècles de tradition portugaise – nous sentons bien nettement l'effort humain qui a été fait pour réussir à satisfaire commodément et esthétiquement les besoins de la vie. Personne n'a eu la prétention de faire,

By looking at these cheerful 'decorative' objects, the public of these exhibitions could not realise the grim reality of the poverty-stricken Portuguese rural world and, accordingly, completely ignored the difficult lives of the people who had produced them for use in daily life.

Fig. 1 Displays of objects in metal (iron plate cut-out oil lamps), horn (water and gunpowder containers with incised decoration), wood (pair of oxen figures), and ceramic (decorated pots in black and incrusted clay and a heart-painted glazed plate) belonging to the SPN ethnographic collection originally exhibited in Geneva and Lisbon. Photo Mario Novais (circa 1936), Col. Estúdio Mário Novais, FCG-BA.

Still, for the first time, counting on some inputs from abroad that were vital to boost national pride – reinforced by the ensuing Portuguese participation in the international expositions of Paris and New York –, the homogenised mass of the 'primitive' Portuguese People – or the politically appropriated reviewed version of its character and art – was laudably presented as an official positive model. This time, the paradigm of the 'primitive' Portuguese was bestowed with illusory innocence and purity rather than insisting on its previous dominant image as a kind of living 'pre-historical man' incapable of keeping up with the progress. Concepts of modernity, or progress, were deliberately called into question when discussing the rudimentary way these populations still live in the mid-twentieth century. In articles about the contest *Aldeia Mais Portuguesa de Portugal* [Most Portuguese Village in Portugal][34] – held by the SPN in 1938 –,

dans cette salle, une exposition ethnographique. Bien loin de là! Pour atteindre un tel objectif il lui faudrait un caractère scientifique, méthodique et muséographique qui manque ici. On a tout bonnement eu l'idée de rendre palpable une des vibrations de l'âme portugaise."]

[34] The competition held between a group of selected villages to find the purest and the most representative from all over the country would be mainly

this interpretation was reinforced by praising the putative beauty of the healthy and pure rural life and by belittling the well-being that the journalists enjoyed in their distant urban life, understood here as supplementary to the happy existence of the peasants, and not as a necessary future development for their lives.

> And now, the question may be asked, "Is then the Most Portuguese Village the least advanced?" In the first place, it would be necessary to prove what progress means in this case and whether, by having health, we should call the happy one who has it primitive or backward. Secondly, considering progress as material development, the vulgar petty concept, this contest of the "Galo de Prata" will stimulate such progress within the Portuguese characteristics proper to each land. Moreover, isn't it progress to build the soul to resist denationalisation? There are enough people today, thank God, who have good taste in their village to build or maintain a house of the rural type, without roofs of industrial-produced tiles, and, nevertheless, with the desired requirements, not forgetting those of electric light and telephony (Chaves, 1938: 437).[35]

GOALS AND METHODS

In this perspective, the primary functions of these actions would be, quoting António Ferro's laudatory discourses about the 1936 'Popular' Arts exhibition in Lisbon:

> The valorisation of the people's art, the art that can be considered the spontaneous, harmonious language of their hands, [...] art of our people, an image of their simplicity and beauty. To exalt and sing the Portuguese people, the people of our towns, villages, and hamlets, of our plains and highlands, is to make authentic national propaganda, the

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aimed at propaganda within borders, feeding the press with details that integrated the visual references previously exposed out of context, now in their original world. However, this was still as carefully and appropriately shown as the 'artistic' objects were earlier. The political goal would be to present, through the press, the happy communion between the 'paternal' regime and the natural purity of the rural people.

[35] ["E agora perguntar-se-á: – então a mais portuguesa é a aldeia menos progressiva? Em primeiro lugar, seria necessário provar o que significa neste caso o progresso, e se, por ter saúde, havemos de chamar primitivo ou retrógrado ao feliz que a tem. Em segundo lugar, considerando o progresso como desenvolvimento material, o mesquinho conceito vulgar, êste concurso do «Galo de Prata» estimulará tal progresso dentro das características portuguesas, próprias de cada terra. E não será progresso criar alma de resistir à desnacionalização?

Há já hoje bastante gente, graças a Deus, que tem o bom gôsto de na sua aldeia construir ou conservar a casa do tipo aldeão, sem telhados de telha de Marselha, e, não obstante, com os requisitos apetecidos, sem esquecer os da luz eléctrica e da telefonia"]

> propaganda of a living force of the nation that politicians have not been able to pollute, water that is always running and no longer clouded.
>
> Nevertheless, what is the use of this exposition? – Practical men will ask – those who always seek, sometimes rightly so – the constructive purpose of all human gestures and actions. Its leading utility is undoubtedly in its vital contribution to the resurgence of the national soul in the totally Portuguese hour we live through.[36]

The significance of presenting the country through this traditional core would be evident in the briefings created by Ferro and SPN to the national representations to the International Expositions of 1937 in Paris and 1939 in New York, both events celebrating contemporaneity and the future.[37] In Paris, as later in New York, the Portuguese pavilion exhibited the "art of good governance of a people,"[38] displaying the success of Salazar's regime work through enthusiastic statistics mapped on modernist three-dimensional displays and appealing blown-up photographs. The itinerary would climax in a room, designed on a contrasting note, entirely dedicated to an ethnographic collection of folk artefacts (fig. 2). At the same time, on the pavilion terrace, folkloric dance and music were played at parties miming traditional summer festivities. The presence of tradition, therefore, humanised the progress numbers.

Rather than parading these objects, the intention was to promote a reinvention of the country in all its creative and productive fields through them, thus forsaking external influences, as Ferro said in the discourse mentioned earlier.

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[36] António Ferro quoted in "A Grande Exposição de Arte Popular," *Diário da Manhã* [newspaper] (Lisboa), Jun. 5, 1936. ["A valorização da arte do povo, dessa arte que pode considerar-se a linguagem espontanea, harmoniosa, das suas mãos, [...] arte do nosso povo, imagem da sua simplicidade e beleza. Exaltar e cantar o povo português, o povo das nossas vilorias, aldeias e lugarejos, das nossas planícies e serranias, é fazer autentica propaganda nacional, a propaganda duma força viva da nação que os políticos não conseguiram inquinar, agua sempre corrente e jámais turvada [...] Mas qual a utilidade desta exposição? – Perguntarão os homens práticos, aqueles que procuram sempre, às vezes com razão, a finalidade construtiva de todos os gestos e acções humanas. A sua principal utilidade está, sem dúvida, na importante contribuição que vem dar ao ressurgimento da alma nacional na hora totalmente portuguesa que estamos vivendo"]

[37] The Paris exposition's full designation was: *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne* [International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life], and the *motto* of the 1939 New York World's Fair was 'The World of Tomorrow.' About the use of the exhibition as political discourse during *Estado Novo*, see Gori, 2018: 116-136.

[38] António Ferro Paris' Pavilion inauguration discourse quoted in "A Exposição de Paris 1937 [...] O notavel discurso de Antonio Ferro...," *Diário de Notícias* [newspaper] (Lisboa), Jun. 6, 1937. ["A arte de bem governar um povo"]

> It is also convenient to underline the pretext offered to our artists – painters, sculptors, architects, and even writers – to enrich their vision and increasingly nationalise their art. Seen well, felt well, this exhibition may mark an era and a direction in contemporary Portuguese art. It may also direct many of our artists towards the vast and rich field of the minor arts by creating workshops where they will develop the clear and pure suggestions that the people give them or by working to return small and tasteful 'popular' industries to their primitive good taste.[39]

Nearing the end of his term at the helm of SPN, Ferro would reiterate this intention while inaugurating the Museum of 'Popular' Art in 1948, where the ethnographic collection was to be permanently displayed:

> In any case, this Museum will remain here as a source of inspiration for our artists, as an ethnographic studies centre, and as the flower and root of our grace. What is more, the Museum of 'Popular' Art will remain a school of good taste to get ideas and suggestions for home decoration: of the rich, who would come to get inspiration for their Portuguese furniture and interiors, and the poor, who, by simply copying what they see, will not need to be rich to live beautifully (Ferro, 1948: 22).[40]

The official cultural policy of the *Estado Novo* was grounded on a distinctive visual aesthetic, where the national tradition's primaeval outputs were paramount as reference inputs for new creations. This was achieved through the power of analysis and synthesis of a diverse group of modernist artists who, working for the SPN, developed the new official 'image' gradually perceived as a *modern* national style.

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[39] "A Grande Exposição de Arte Popular." ["Conveniente sublinhar ainda o pretexto que se oferece aos nossos artistas – pintores, escultores, arquitectos e até escritores – para enriquecerem a sua visão, para nacionalizarem cada vez mais a sua arte. Bem vista, bem sentida, pode esta exposição marcar uma época e uma direcção na arte portuguesa contemporânea. Pode ainda encaminhar muitos dos nossos artistas para o campo, tão vasto e rico, das artes menores criando oficinas onde se ocupem em desenvolver as sugestões claras e puras que o povo lhes dá, ou simplesmente, trabalhando para fazer regressar pequenas e saborosas indústrias populares ao seu bom gosto primitivo"]

[40] ["Seja como for, aqui fica este Museu como fonte de inspiração para os nossos artistas, como centro de estudos etnográficos, como flor e raiz da nossa graça. Mais ainda: o Museu de Arte Popular ficará sendo uma escola de bom-gosto onde poderão vir buscar ideias, sugestões, para o arranjo das suas casas, os ricos que saibam vir aqui inspirar-se para os seus mobiliários e interiores portugueses e os pobres que, limitando-se a copiar o que virem, não precisarão de ser ricos para viverem com beleza"]

Fig. 2 Popular Arts Room (designed by Tom) of the Portuguese Pavilion at the Paris International Exposition, 1937. Inside the glass case are displayed traditional figurines in molded and painted clay from Estremoz; on top of it, part of the contemporary dolls collection presented regional costumes (by Tom and Dalila do Carmo). Photo Mario Novais (1937), Col. Estúdio Mário Novais, FCG-BA.

These proto-designers managed it by purifying the formal features of folk arts, reducing them to an assortment of recognisable formulas, subsequently applied to several different *media*[41] in order to assert the regime's values while also acknowledging

[41] Besides the already mentioned production of exhibitions in Portugal and abroad: several competitions; traveling cinema and library services; diverse editorial lines (from tour guides and art catalogues to propaganda pamphlets in various languages); an extensive program of national prizes for Arts and Literature; the creation of theatre and ballet companies, as was the case of the national dance company, *Bailados Portugueses Verde Gaio*, an aspiration of

current communication demands. From the early ideological conceptualisation up to the promotion of final results, this appropriation process follows procedures that are nowadays easily identified as modern design methodologies: introductory design briefings can be pointed out, but even more important is the fact that the implementation of Ferro's cultural agenda can be understood as a complex strategic design[42] programme whose outputs encompassed graphic arts, product, exhibition and interior design, as well as set and costumes design.

On a broad spectrum, the results are intended to suggest customs, details, and motives that are easily and broadly regarded as 'vernacular Portuguese.' Once acknowledged, regional differences should not be immediately ascribed to a particular place or region but rather contribute to reinforcing a Hobsbawmian 'reinvented-national-mingled' tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). That is, they would reinforce a fake Portuguese-generic symbolic repertoire to be endlessly repeated without provincial acrimony and promoted under the umbrella of the *Campanha do Bom Gosto* [Good Taste Campaign].[43]

A DIFFICULT TASK AND A NEW AESTHETIC IN INTERIOR DESIGN

Developing the domestic interiors of an ideal Portuguese home would be one of the most challenging appropriations since, in a regime that defined itself with the motto *Deus, Pátria e Família* [God, Fatherland, Family], those "who say family, say home; whoever says home, says his own moral [...] atmosphere" (Salazar, 1933: 200). [44]

The 'House,' 'Nest,' and 'Home' were categorised as places of meeting and refuge, safeguarding physical and spiritual values. It is also a place where the traditional family unit could better protect itself from any external factors that might attack and distort its supposed perfect unity. As a concept, 'Home' was thus a

António Ferro since the *Russian Ballets* brief passage in Lisbon practically two decades before.

[42] While generally associated with business practice, these heuristic methods could be observed in creating identities serving ideologies of extreme political spheres. For a definition of 'strategic design,' see Marshal and Erlhoff, eds., 2008.

[43] The title of a series of articles in the SPN's Panorama magazine about the definition of the official good taste, the name can be used as an 'umbrella term' for the regime's aesthetic agenda. See Bártolo, 2014: 141-154.

[44] ["Quem diz família, diz lar; quem diz lar, diz atmosfera moral"]

Doppelgänger of 'Family,' of the moral stance on which the State supported itself and, as such, its treatment would be crucial.

As already mentioned, many objects from the rustic domestic universe – rich in their ornamentation as textiles, pottery and metalwork – were *per se* considered valid in aesthetical terms, as they reiterated the expected spirit of new decorations.[45] Nevertheless, constructing a complete *Gesamtkunstwerk '*domestic whole,' exclusively counting on objects from vernacular origins, was regrettably unattainable. The key problem was the furniture pieces' impracticality, rusticity and lack of aesthetic quality in comparison with the other collected vernacular outputs.

> The habit of talking about Portuguese regional furniture gives the misleading idea that it has actual existence and can be acquired, which is untrue. On the contrary, except for the furniture of the rustic house of the Portuguese provinces, which performs a simple utilitarian function, primary and without a defined character, poor in constructive imagination, very far from having an affirmative style and therefore without any representative category, nothing exists that allows a dignified use (Lage apud Alves, 2013: 122).[46]

Pieces allowing this 'dignified use' were almost unattainable in the rustic dwellings throughout Portugal. The existing pieces of furniture seen in period photographs – cots made of boards over benches, chests of flat planks, cumbersome settles, low stools or tree stump tripod benches, crudely made and serving the most basic utilitarian functions – remained a vivid portrayal of the impoverished rural rough lifestyle. They could hardly be directly transposed to a contemporary home, eventually having no place in the bucolic fantasy put forward by the SPN. In other words, a paradox arises, as not only were there no immediate functional reuses for these rough objects in the bourgeois home but also there were no sufficient typologies to conform to the complex needs of contemporary life.

The only genre commonly perceived as close to this vernacular threshold was the Alentejo-painted furniture, understood by the ethnographers mentioned earlier as a decline. In a letter

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[45] About the ideological use of folk produced artefacts in domestic interiors see Alves, 2016: 145-163

[46] ["Pelo hábito de se falar em mobiliário regional português tem-se a enganadora ideia de que ele tem existência real e pode adquirir-se, o que não sucede de facto. Exceptuando o mobiliário da casa rústica das províncias portuguesas, que desempenha a simples função utilitária, primário e sem carácter definido, pobre de imaginação construtiva, muito longe de ter um estilo afirmativo e portanto sem qualquer categoria representativa, nada existe que permita uma utilização digna"]

dated October 1944, Francisco Lage considered it "just a funny case invented in Évora, incapable of representing the traditional physiognomy of the Alentejo province" (Lages apud Alves, 2013: 117),[47] taking it as resulting from adulteration processes made by the folk authors themselves.

From 1940 onwards, artist-designers associated with the SPN explored solutions to this problem by decorating a set of seven small *pousadas* [state inns] – created as an example and incentive for private hotel initiative – and, later, by working in the decoration of country homes for 'enlightened' clients (fig. 3). This top-down strategy sought that the influence of the new taste permeated the general audience by following the 'trend-setter' elites.[48]

Fig. 3 Living rooms of the summer houses of Diamantino Tojal and Keil families (respectively designed by Fred Kradolfer (?) and by Francisco and Maria Keil). Photo Mário Novais (circa 1947 and 1943), Col. Estúdio Mário Novais, FCG-BA.

Oriented towards this aim, artists adapted ornamental motifs from an assortment of recognised generic folk formulas to contemporary usages producing new furnishings primarily in local types of wood with occasional details in wrought iron. Shapes were forged, turned on lathes, or cut in flat scroll contours inspired by vernacular motifs. In other words, they were loosely copied from patterns and objects used centuries before by religious and aristocratic elites. Ornamentation motifs of a 'primitive' lexicon, such as simple geometric patterns, flowers, spirals, and scrolls, or the heart shape – originally recurrent in painted pottery, embroideries, or incised objects of horn, wood, or cork – were engraved or painted on otherwise featureless planes, respectively accepting the vernacular stereotypes of the sober

[47] ["apenas um caso engraçado inventado em Évora, mas incapaz de representar a fisionomia tradicional do Alentejo"]

[48] About the Portuguese society strata, see Martinho, 2006: 99-131.

north mountains or the merrier southern plains' ambiences. The complexity of the brief could be understood in the descriptive report accompanying José Luís Brandão de Carvalho's decoration project for *São Gonçalo Pousada.*

> Most decorative motifs were based on the Art of the People of the *Marão* regions. Nevertheless, almost everything was adapted to current needs considering the context because the coarseness of the furniture and utensils of those high places' people indicates a simple, primitive way of life devoid of all well-being.
>
> The furniture has, at most, one or another carved motif and the naive cut of the ironwork. [...]
>
> The lamps and candlesticks are made of iron, adapted as best as possible to electric lighting, which, being recent, has yet to give the people the opportunity to create new utensils with a marked 'popular' and artistic character. [...]
>
> Clay, faience, and embroidery created by the people, with their grace and modest and humble beauty, will help to enrich this decorative ensemble, free of pretentiousness, made by the Portuguese for the Portuguese and for those who come from strange lands wishing to know us, as we are and wish to be.[49]

The few vernacular types of furniture, from folk or more spartan erudite provenance, considered 'dignified' were [re-]created through this modern process: as a reproduced whole, like the *Rabo-de-bacalhau* chair [codfish-tail chair];[50] as just appropriated forms as the parallelepiped format of the ornamented clothes chest was now interpreted as a long dining room sideboard; or sporadically, in its functional features like the folding parts of the pantry

[49] José Luiz Brandão de Carvalho, 'A exigüidade da verba, e uma ou outra deficiência arquitectónica..., 1941-08', document at SPN archives, IAN-TT, Lisboa (cx-4202 [Correspondência Expedida e Recebida relativa a Pousadas e Hotéis], Arquivo SNI, PT/TT/SNI-DGT/I/1/8, IAN/TT, Lisboa). [A quási totalidade dos motivos decorativos foram rebuscados na Arte do Povo da região de Aquém e Além Marão, mas quási tudo se adaptou às exigências do confôrto, porque a rudeza dos móveis e utensílios das gentes daquelas paragens altaneiras é índice dum viver simples, primitivo e despido de todo o bem-estar.| O mobiliário tem a valorizá-lo, quando muito, um ou outro motivo entalhado e o recorte ingénuo das ferragens.[...] São de ferro os candieiros e castiçais, adaptados o melhor possível a iluminação electrica que, por ser recente, não deu ensejo ao Povo a criar para ela novos utensílios com acentuada feição popular e artística. [...]| Barros, faianças e bordados criados pelo Povo, com sua graça e beleza recatada e humilde, ajudarão a enriquecer êste conjunto decorativo, despido de pretenciosismo, feito por portugues para portugueses e para aqueles que de estranhas terras vierem no desejo de nos conhecerem, tal como somos e queremos ser."]

[50] A widespread eighteenth Century-formed typology, known in England as Windsor chairs and thoroughly cherished and recreated through the Arts and Crafts movement, was now comprehend as a 'traditional Portuguese' chair with its heart--shaped holes on the backrest.

cupboards designed by Tom[51] for the Quinta dos Fóios and the De Roo summer house (1942 and 1944), appropriating the folding table attached to the backs of the settles commonly placed by the fireplaces on the coldest provinces of the North (fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Cupboard with fold-down table and benches for Quinta dos Fóios summer house designed by Tom in 1942. Photo Mário Novais (circa 1942), Col. Estúdio Mário Novais, FCG-BA.

Eventually, a modern style of interior decoration coherently started to emerge through this 'modern' appropriation of folk heritage. The style was understood as successfully distinguishing itself from highbrow old Portuguese styles, imported fashionable trends, or even the international modernism models experienced before. At the same time, it acknowledged current life needs and a wished-for state of mind. Indeed, processes and outputs were very similar to the solutions developed on other similar authoritarian regimes,[52] as well as on 'democratic nations'

[51] Thomas de Mello (a.k.a. Tom) was a self-taught artist and designer working since the late 1920s. From the mid-30s, he assiduously collaborated with the regime as part of what came to be called the SPN's team of modernist artist-decorators. On the approach to Portuguese vernacular culture it should be mentioned Tom's contribution to the development of the 'Popular' Art exhibitions in Geneva and Lisbon (1935, 1936); his gold medal for the 1937 Paris pavilion's 'Popular' Arts room creation; the interiors design of 'traditional' houses in the Portuguese Villages section of the Portuguese World Exhibition in Lisbon in 1940, and later as artistic director of the 'Popular' Arts Museum, opened in 1948.

[52] Other 'fascist' regimes defined their own worlds based on the sublimation of their traditional rural pasts during the inter-war years, while in Spain, the same thing will succeed after Franco's victory in 1939. For the Italian case, see Sabatino, 2012.

where a putative apolitical return to ornament and tradition was also being explored as an alternative to the strict functionalism of the 1920s.

Antonio Ferro named this trend *Estilo do Secretariado* or *Estilo SNI* [Secretariat's style]. With its top-down approach, it successfully permeated different social strata. Regime initiatives and private commissions finally impacted industrial production, as demonstrated by the production of the Olaio furniture factory from 1945 onwards and other smaller-scale businesses throughout the following decades.

Using this 'primitive' realm was essential in redefining a suitable 'Portuguese Home' under the *Estado Novo* regime. At the end of the 1940s, 'Nation', 'Home', and 'People' could be, through it, perceived as a single undifferentiated entity. The 'primitiveness' of the People, fully appropriated, was now the image of a 'new' country.

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BETWEEN FIGURATIVISM AND ABSTRACTIONISM: MARIO DE ANDRADE AND THE TABOO OF THE RETURN TO ORDER

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ABSTRACT

In the first half of the 20th century, the debate on figurativism/abstractionism went beyond the limits of the artistic sphere, touching on political, social, ideological and identity-related issues. In the case of Brazilian modernism, in light of the thesis proposed by art historian Tadeu Chiarelli, the arrival of abstract art in the country would only occur after the death of art critic and writer Mário de Andrade (1893-1945), a consummate defender of figurative Brazilianness in dialogue with the Return to Order. This chapter aims to analyse the relationship between the critic and the supposed abnegation of abstractionism, examining how such denial subverts or subjects Brazilian modernism within a unique logic of historical avant-garde. Everything will depend on where we start from: within the Brazilian spectrum of literature, Chiarelli's thesis leads us to a specific point; however, within the scope of global literature, it can lead us somewhere else.

MÁRIO DE ANDRADE AND THE TABOO OF THE RETURN TO ORDER

In a brief, concise text of less than ten pages, art historian Tadeu Chiarell reworded the meaning of Mário de Andrade[1] to Brazilian modernism, rewriting his actions against historical avant-gardes towards the Return to Order (Chiarelli, 2022).

Published at the height of heated debates surrounding the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 1922 Modern Art Week,[2] the historian's text defended the thesis that while Mário de Andrade was alive and active in the national arts system, that is, until 1945, Brazil failed to produce a single work of art of an abstract nature. In other words, nothing was produced equivalent to the historical avant-gardes in their most radical expressions.

According to the art historian, this was due to the fact that Mário de Andrade's aesthetic project, a driving force behind the critical support of modernism in Brazil, was committed to legitimising the figurative and symbolic visuality of the Brazilian people, of Brazilianness, encoded in realistic language, in which there would be no room for the artist's conflicts with himself, with the world or with radical avant-garde experiments, there would be no room for individualism. Modern art, as far as Andrade was concerned, had to involve a social commitment of a direct iconographic approach to the people, resembling what he epithetised as "action-works" (Andrade, 1985: 293-295) or "interested-art. (Andrade, 1972: 18-20).

Chiarelli revealed letters and texts written by Andrade to and about renowned artists in the Brazilian modernist pantheon. Excerpts dedicated to Tarsila do Amaral, Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, Lasar Segall, can be seen.

Praise for *secondary* artists such as Gastão Worm and Hugo Adami is also highlighted, to promote the argument of the appreciation the critic gave to "craftsmen-painters" with consolidated nationalist ideologies, even if these artists were closer to a so-called academic language.

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[1] Mario de Andrade was born in São Paulo, Brazil in 1893. He is now recognised as one of the greatest intellectuals in the country in the first half of the 20th century. As a humanist, he worked on several cultural fronts: he was a literary critic, art critic, music teacher, he was regarded as a prodigious pianist, he was a writer, a poet, a would-be anthropologist and sociologist, historian; he wrote *Macunaíma* and *Pauliceia Desvairada*, works regarded as landmarks of Brazilian modernism. Although he did not belong to a noble or wealthy family, like his intellectual partner Oswald de Andrade, he grew up among politicians and intellectuals. The critic never left Brazil, not for financial reasons, but for reasons of political and cultural positioning.

[2] For an updated read on the national ephemeris that the 1922 Modern Art Week acquired on various artistic-cultural fronts over the years,

Upon creating this argument, Chiarelli went against the grain of much of the historiography dedicated to Mario de Andrade, which places him as a figurehead of the national avant-garde, understood as a project of historical rupture with the national academic tradition and interpreted at all times as a reference for delay in the face of "well-accepted" historical avant-gardes, the "isms". The art historian believes that the study of Andrade's critical production and Brazilian modernism itself should be taken as a case study of the singularities that the Return to Order undertook in Brazil:

> With the need to provide Brazil with modern art and, at the same time, still concerned with capturing local men and their surroundings - contrary to what most of the author's scholars in other areas believe - Mário found himself expressing, in modernism, all the iconoclastic impetus prevailing in the most radical aspects of the European avant-gardes. (....) Combining the structural rigour of painting with the need to portray "mulattas, blacks and carnivals", will force the critic to seek, within the international artistic scene of the era, stylistic directions that would shun the cult of avant-garde experimentalism, scrutinising, in the European scene, less radical manifestations and more interested in a sober modernism, attentive to the expressive deformation of form, but upholding the tradition that always believed in the visual arts as creators of doubles of reality. In this regard, Mário de Andrade sought in the European debate of the 1910s/1920s, aspects that - grouped as part of what was conventionally known as a "return to order" – strove for modern art integrated with the tradition of European art, the appreciation of craftsmanship in art and local visual cultures (Chiarelli, 2022: 2-3).[3]

As such, Mário de Andrade would be fully aware of the most radical plastic experimentations. However, he would have undermined his transnational connections with a Europe focused on the Return to Order, as this was the dialogue that best suited his own critical construct. In other words, he was not behind the times or mimicking the situation in Europe, he was communicating with his foreign peers on the same frequency, horizontally.

Nevertheless, recognising Andrade's connection with the Return to Order in Brazil is ultimately taboo. This is because Mário de Andrade is the central figure of modernism, and thinking about him through the logic of the Return to Order is the same as placing him in a pejorative political and aesthetic space of conservative return. Basically, this is the same as placing him in direct dialogue with systems of thought devised by totalitarian states.

For many decades, this ideological taboo literally swept away the possibility of the Return to Order having any historiographical

[3] My translation from the Portuguese.

elaboration as an apprehension in the Brazilian arts system, let alone in Andrade's intellectuality and even less in the official historiography of modernism. It is only since 1995, with the studies of Tadeu Chiarelli and Ana Gonçalves Magalhães, as we will see in due course, that we have begun to systematically trace the deep-rooted connection between the Return to Order, with special mention of the Italian version, and the domestic modernist artistic scene (Chiarelli, 1995: 109-134).

MODERNISMS AS MULTIPLE PHENOMENA

In order to rescue the stable, although unfinished, historiographical conception of Brazilian modernism, let us take the opposite route, returning to the prehistory of the process of creating an idea of unity for "modern art", in which Mario de Andrade most certainly played a decisive role, by proposing that artists meet, first and foremost, the need to portray Brazilians.

Retrospectively, from 1920 to 1940, the set of ideas organised as "Brazilian modernism" emerged from the writings of the key players in the modernist movement's circle. Indeed, in the 1940s, Mario de Andrade revisited the records of the 1922 Modern Art Week and classified it as a useless event with no engagement or social change in Brazil's reality.

After Andrade's death, from 1950 to 1960, there was a turning point in literature dedicated to the Modern Art Week, primarily due to a specific demand: the São Paulo Art Biennial (1951). To justify the huge public investment in an event of the magnitude of the Biennial, a celebratory narrative was drawn up in which the Modern Art Week, which also took place in the city of São Paulo, is portrayed as a kind of forefront of the most radical Brazilian avant-garde, which would provide space, in the arts system, for an exhibition such as the Biennial. However, this bibliography was aimed much more at promoting a celebratory idea than at the methodological rigour of historical research regarding the transnational dialogue of modernists.

One needs to remember, however, that throughout the first and second periods of production of modernist documentation, that is, from 1920 to 1960, there was no bibliography naming the Return to Order as a reality, as this terminology still hadn't been coined by art historians, neither at home nor abroad. The phenomenon of the Return to Order, and everything it meant, first began to be debated on an international basis in 1970.

It was precisely from this year on that universities, including University of São Paulo (USP) and State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) would produce a vast bibliography of critical revisionism, featuring theses, articles and seminars in which the multiple notions of avant-garde and modernism were redefined and expanded, but the Return to Order, eclipsed by the figurativism of Brazilian modernism, was simply not addressed.

There is no bibliography from this time that makes a serious and rigorous connection between Brazilian modernism and the European Return to Order, nor any studies that discuss the recent bibliography internationally produced.

The absence of this debate in the 1970s, in part, needs to be understood within the ideological scope of that generation of thinkers. At that time, care in choosing designations to create perspectives was latent. Admitting that the roots of Brazilian modernism lay in terms such as "solidity" and "plastic purity", as Mário de Andrade argued so passionately, was the same as adding the taboo of fascist conservatism to Brazilian modernism.

To bypass the continuous romance of the Brazilian artistic environment in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s with the Return to Order, serious historiographical deviations took place to avoid the analysis of a unique and contradictory culture such as Brazil's. Excessive aesthetic formalisms also swept countless symptoms and problems of modernism under the carpet, openly ignoring the sources of studies such as collections and archives.

The lack of rigour in the research of these platforms gave rise to a celebratory, superficial type of literature based on the idea of modernism as a unique, inclusive phenomenon, with no theoretical cracks, with no racial, economic or social cracks, which was repeated recursively as a positivist legacy of the "well-accepted" avant-garde European ideas, that is, "isms". It's a fictional story.

In this context, art historians such as Tadeu Chiarelli were among the pioneers to question the modernist heritage in the 1990s in light of the Return to Order. Before him, evidence of the unpopular connection had already been pointed out in the 1980s by Maria Rossetti Batista (Batista, 2012) and Annateresa Fabris (Fabris, 1990).

After that, investigations conducted by Ana Gonçalves Magalhães involving a collection that was never analysed, from the collection of the University of São Paulo Museum of Contemporary Art, led to the systematic confirmation of the continuous developments of the Return to Order in the Brazilian arts system (Fig. 1, Fig. 2). This collection, shipped to São Paulo

between 1946 and 1947, brought together the cardinal aesthetics of modern Italian art marinated in a historical fascist broth.[4]

Fig. 1 Mário Sironi, *I pescatori* (*The fishermen*), 1924, oil on canvas, 108.8x89.4cm, São Paulo, MAC USP.

Fig. 2 Cândido Portinari. *Retirantes* (*Migrants*), 1936, oil on canvas, 73.3x59.5cm, São Paulo, Mário de Andrade 's Collection, IEB USP.

The pen with the authority to transcribe and commit to memory the complexity of this collection in Brazil, however, chose to address it as a collection of paintings that failed to respond to an aesthetic or historical-formative trajectory, but that met the individual tastes of the tycoon who acquired it, Matarazzo. Rendering it hermetic and personal avoided the political discomfort of its origin and its significance was not debated, making it difficult, among other things, to discuss its symptomatic reflection in the creative process of the most renowned modernists.

Within the borders of Italy, the spirit of the Return to Order arose as a cyclical response to a bourgeois, European, slow and progressive modernisation, which had already gone through the upheaval of the avant-gardists and was breathing in the air of a fascist Italy at that time. Conservative moral longings often calcified in the myth of "Italianity" and the return of the Italian people to their Latin roots, were incorporated into the language of artists and intellectuals. In the historiographical field, however, the discourses about this period were stigmatised within a single line of pejorative reading, or in other words, ignoring the fact that different values and other languages coexisted with

[4] We suggest the following to gain a better understanding of the history behind this collection and its connections with Brazil: ver Magalhães, 2013..

the so-called "return" and totalitarian policies, including radical avant-garde ones.

Nonetheless, in the Brazilian context, the roots of the artistic iconography produced and legitimated as avant-garde in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s lie in conceptions pertaining to the language of a Europe surrounded by totalitarian states. Indeed, the myth of "Brazilianness" defended by Mário de Andrade, with the solidification of a national identity fostered from the "singularities" of our land, sounds, if we listen very carefully, like a melody already felt everywhere.

The emphasis placed on the Return to Order in the production processes of Brazilian modernists gives rise, among other things, to the constant need to renew the forms of creation of artistic value in modern art and continuous questioning, and perhaps even already outdated, of the meaning given to the term avant-garde, even more so in Latin American countries.

Even though there is considerable friction in methodologies used to work on the idea of avant-garde in Latin America, Tadeu Chiarelli's brief, concise statement specifically mentions two main paths of meaning that are different from each other .

Based on entirely different and widespread perspectives in the understanding of the Latin American avant-gardes of the 1920s and 1930s, intellectuals such as the sociologist Sergio Micel (Miceli, 2012) and the literary critic Jorge Schwartz (Schwartz, 2013) published studies a few months apart, one in late 2012 and the other in early 2013, in which they deal with Latin American avant-gardes based on practically the same case studies (Mário de Andrade in Brazil and Jorge Luis Borges in Argentina; Cândido Portinari in Brazil, Xul Solar in Argentina), but with methodologies from completely different places.

The friction of difference is already evident in the titles: one of which is "Avant-guards in Retreat", and the other "The Fervour of the Avant-guards". In the former, Micéli extracts the notion that in peripheral countries subjected to Portuguese and Spanish colonisation processes – such as the Latin American countries – artists negotiated themes and freedoms with the colonial system in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, dependence and negotiation were transferred to economic and state power, the economic power of traditional families in the case of Brazil, and the economic power of press magnates in the case of Argentina.

As far as the sociologist is concerned, the social origin of the relationships of Latin American intellectuals regarded as avant-garde must be taken into account, because it is this social

origin that marks the ultranationalist poetics and thought sympathetic to the Return to Order.

In the case of Schwartz, there is the exaltation of European avant-garde flows crystallised in the "isms"; there is the recognition of the colonial condition, permeating all the contradictions of the Latin American avant-gardes and splitting them into two extremes: one an imitation of the European avant-gardes and the other one of unprecedented originality. The critic recognises that these two extremes often coexist in the same creative process, which renders the case of the Latin American avant-garde sui generis. The political and economic preambles that financed the relations of intellectuals among themselves and with Europe are secondary to the result of plastic production, as aesthetic freedom represents the a priori of the avant-gardes.

That having been said, it is clear that the results of the same topic are totally different depending on the methodology used, and this also applies to the place from which the ideas for a text are taken.

For those reading from a global historiographical perspective, shedding light on the relations between the Brazilian artistic environment and the Return to Order in order to recognise the absence of abstraction in Brazil until the year 1940 is to return to the methodologies of a history of art that have already surpassed the unique meaning of avant-garde.

However, for those reading from the Brazilian perspective, shedding a light on these relationships is, in a way, addressing a taboo and putting an end to the idealisation of a hegemonic, celebratory, unblemished modernist history, one which people wanted to contest, but ended up succumbing to the international lingua franca.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We ardently discuss the harmful consequences of certain historical revisionisms, of *cancellations*, so in vogue in the virtual media and often seen as a generational phenomenon, but we forget that running a fine tooth comb through history happened systematically in the writings of yesterday.

Recognising Mário de Andrade's connection with the Return to Order is a taboo that burdens the critic's shoulders with a simplistic association with conservatism and, indirectly, with fascism, tarnishing all of his intellectual complexity even though

Mário de Andrade was light years away from being even the slightest bit sympathetic to fascism or extremist conservatism.

Recognising the critic's complete awareness of European radical avant-gardes and his complete horizontal activity among his international peers is to understand that critical elaborations ran both from the centre to the periphery and from the periphery to the centre. For example, Mário de Andrade recognises surrealism as an expression of countries in decadence – such as France – and Brazil, according to him, did not need it.

To sum up, if we start thinking about Andrade's critical production as it was and how it was reflected in the group of artists from his generation, perhaps we will have the key to practical and empirical access to the theories that revisit peripheral modernisms that are no longer subservient to an avant-garde European "centre." In the case of Brazilian modernism, his critical texts enable us to understand that Brazil was not only in tune with this centre, but sometimes rose up to oppose it.

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PRIMITIVISM, FOLKLORE AND MODERNISM IN 1920'S GRANADA. FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA, MANUEL DE FALLA AND THE FAMELESS HERMENEGILDO LANZ

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the notions of primitivism, folklore, and modernism operating in Granada, in the south of Spain, from the 1920s until the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. At the heart of the topic lies *El Rinconcillo*, a Granadian cultural group made known by some prominent members, such as the world-famous poet Federico García Lorca and the composer Manuel de Falla, along with many other 'satellite' intellectuals, such as the multifaceted yet fameless artist and drawing teacher Hermenegildo Lanz. Lanz's work will be thoroughly analysed while discussing the context in which he worked from a new perspective that identifies primitivism as a basis for innovation. Lanz's work and Granada's cultural milieu in this period will eventually contribute to elucidate complex threads of modernism developing in a periphery.

HERMENEGILDO LANZ: A KEY FIGURE TO UNDERSTAND MODERNISM THROUGH PRIMITIVISM IN GRANADA

Hermenegildo Lanz (1893, Seville-1949, Granada) was a visual creator and intellectual protagonist of Granada's cultural life from his arrival in 1917 until the triumph of Franco's troops in the Spanish Civil War. He developed several creative approaches indebted to primitivism during his career, based on which it is possible to add meaningful contributions to understanding modernism in Granada and Spain, while also questioning the grand narrative of modernism. In other words, Lanz's case study may contribute to deflating the established centre-periphery narrative, classifying Spain and Granada as delayed.

Even though different notions of primitivism were previously discussed in Falla's and Lorca's work, this is the first study focused on Lanz's work and its connections with primitivism aimed at a thorough understanding of *El Rinconcillo*. Although interest in this cultural group has increased over the last few years, it is still a relatively unknown episode in the international panorama of modernist studies. The conclusions presented in this essay[1] seek to alleviate these circumstances.

The critical aspects of dealing with Lanz's understanding and use of primitivism are backed by several aspects of his artistic practice: his stylistic evolution from academic realism towards a synthesised eclectic modernism integrating sources from artistic, literary and folk heritage; his activity as puppetry and set designer (especially for puppetry plays created with Federico García Lorca and Manuel de Falla); his interest in children's art (closely linked to both his drawing teaching activities and his civic and ideological beliefs); and the fact that all of these threads can be studied in his archive and annotated library (preserved in his self-designed studio-home).[2]

Before getting into more details, it is essential to refer to biographical events to better understand some of Lanz's peculiarities relevant to my argument. He was the son of a prestigious wandering chef dedicated to leasing hotels around the world and managing them by contract. Lanz was born in Seville in 1893, but he spent his childhood and youth in Buenos Aires, Lisbon and Madrid. His personality could not escape being shaped by his family travel record.

[1] They were presented in my PhD research (Escoriza, 2022), improved here by additional arguments focused on primitivism.

[2] Archivo Lanz, private archive located in Lanz's house in Calle hoteles de Belén, Granada.

Between 1905 and 1912, Lanz lived in Lisbon, where he was a pupil of Enrique Casanova y Cos, a Spanish painter based in that city. In his curriculum, Lanz mentions he worked in the studio of the Teatro de D. Maria II scenographer (Mata, 2003: 23). This was his first contact with set design, a work that he valued the most during the prime of his career.

After Lisbon, he moved to Madrid, where he studied at the School of Painting, Sculpture and Engraving.[3] There, he achieved relative success as an engraver, and he exhibited in two Spanish National Annual Exhibitions in 1915 and 1917. In 1917, he arrived in Granada after securing a position of drawing teacher at the Teacher Training College.[4] There, he found an old-fashioned cultural environment that would soon change. The following year, he met García Lorca at the presentation of the poet's first book. The poet used to hang out with a vast and diverse group of intellectuals at the Cafe Alameda—Lanz was soon included in the party too— regularly occupying a *rinconcillo*[5] where they discussed cultural affairs, as in many other *tertulias* in Spain. The group aimed at innovating Granada's cultural milieu. A pivotal moment happened in 1920, when the composer Manuel de Falla moved to Granada to find inspiration and calm and decisively enriched the city's cultural ambience —establishing a fruitful relationship with the *El Rinconcillo's* group.

As previously stated, Lanz's primary professional career—and his main vocation—was teaching drawing. Therefore, the fact that his art was closely related to children's art and his intellectual, cultural, and artistic concerns were linked to pedagogy comes as no surprise. Because Lanz's mainstay was teaching, he was an atypical artist: he never participated in the ordinary art market channels, and he was far from the clichés of the bohemian *genius* artist. Moreover, he was a multifaceted and polymorphic creator, experimenting with many artistic disciplines throughout his career: from engraving to drawing and painting, through graphic design to interior and architectural design (he designed his studio-home); and fashion design, toy design and photography. Finally, he authored several puppetry designs and set designs.

His case stands out as even more exceptional because his archive and library—preserved in excellent conditions in his

[3] Escuela Superior de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado de Madrid.

[4] Escuela Normal de Maestros y Maestras de Granada.

[5] Literally translates to "a little corner," but it also colloquially stands for an intimate place.

self-designed studio-home—constitute a privileged resource for analysing the historical moment in which Lanz lived and produced, particularly the cultural environment of Granada, and by extension, that of Spain and Western Europe. One can investigate Lanz's references taken from rare and foreign books through the volumes on his shelves because his annotations and many other original items are kept in them.

Fig. 1 H. Lanz. *Poster for Exposición Regional de Arte Moderno*, 1929. Museo Casa de los Tiros

Books from all over the world can be found there, namely several bought in Paris during the representation of *Retablo de Maese Pedro* in 1923, a play I will discuss further. Looking at his library, one realises that it would not be necessary for Lanz to travel to places outside Granada to be in contact with new ideas and trends. The historians Anthony Geist and José Monleón

considered that "voyage is not indispensable but rather symptomatic. The immediacy with which cultural artefacts travelled from the metropolis created a new and unprecedented historical situation" (Geist and Monleón, 1999: XXXiii, note 13).

Fig. 2 H. Lanz. Plaque in honor of Pedro Soto de Rojas, 1926.

Lanz owned books related to *Cante Jondo*, Henri Rousseau, and Cubism, side by side with *Dom Quixote*, or an eighteenth-century *Autos Sacramentales* edition gifted by Falla. Especially interesting is the collection of cultural magazines, like *Cruz y Raya*,[6] *Litoral*,[7] *The Studio*,[8] *Cahiers d'art*,[9] *Art et décoration*[10] or *Cronnacheé d'attualitá*.[11] One can only guess he took inspiration from a book on oriental Islamic illuminated art (Kühnel, 1922) to elaborate his visual creations, for instance, the *Cachiporra* and *planistas* works, as well as from an article about a theatre of puppets in Paris (Chavance, 1921). Also, it is possible to prove his international awareness of set design through books like *Das moderne Bühnenbild* (Fischel, 1923) or the article about the Russian ballets in the journal *The Studio* (Laver, 1927).

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6 *Cruz y Raya*, 6, Madrid, September, 15, 1933.

7 *Litoral*, 5, 6, & 7, Málaga, October, 1927 (these three issues of this magazine appeared together in the same volume).

8 *The Studio*, London; 307, October, 1918; 314, May, 1919; 333, November, 1920; 399, June, 1926; 403, October, 1926; 404, November, 1926; 407, February, 1927; 410, May, 1927; 412, July, 1927; 414, September, 1927; 417, December , 1927; 433, April, 1929; 447, June, 1930; 448, July, 1930; 452, November, 1930; 453, December, 1930.

9 *Cahiers d'art*, 1, 4, 5-6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Paris, 1928.

10 89 issues between 1920 to 1922, 1927, 1928, 1930, and 1922 to 1936.

11 *Cronnacheé d'attualitá*, 1-6, January-May, 1922.

LANZ'S SYNTHETICAL EVOLUTION AND HIS RESOURCES FROM THE PAST AND TRADITION

Lanz was academically trained in the Spanish capital, his work remaining indebted to realism, symbolism, and traditionalism. In the provincial Granada, he turned into an eclectic modernist. Paradoxically, it was in this peripheral city that Lanz transformed his style, adopting an approach with synthetical simplicity, according to the neoclassical stylisation common during the 20s.

Indeed, the art historian Jiménez-Blanco has studied the relevance of synthesis associated with primitivism for the development of modernism in Spain, establishing the influence of synthetism (Gauguin, Pont-Aven, and Cloisonism), together with recovering the classical past advocated by the *retour a l'ordre* movement, during the first decades of the twentieth century (Jiménez-Blanco, 2004). The author relates Lanz with Ignacio Zuloaga, Juan de Echevarría or Vázquez Díaz, names which, in fact, can be found in his library.

I contend that while studying Lanz's work transformation, the considerable role that primitivism plays, together with synthethism, must be emphasised. Notwithstanding, previous scholarly texts have never underlined this premise. The highest point of this evolution—and his artistic career—is the xylographical album *Estampas de Granada*, published in 1926, which secured considerable critical attention and prestige. Antonio Espina—writer, critic, and journalist—brought to mention the return to primitivism in cutting-edge European artistic trends when he wrote about Lanz's album (Espina, 1927: 5). José Francés—the influential Spanish art critic— praised its Christian austerity and how Lanz's album transmitted light and shadow contrasts to boxwood (this religious side is important to understand Lanz and *El Rinconcillo* members' activities mentioned ahead).

As a graphic and interior designer, Lanz reached a climax in his works for the National Tourist Board and its Representation in Granada at the Casa de los Tiros during 1929 and 1930, as well as the interior design destined for the new College of Professors, which opened in Granada in 1933. He developed a global design for the latter, proving his pedagogical knowledge and his ability to apply it to functional design purposes—in line with other internationally significant contemporary episodes such as the Bauhaus.

Lanz was also keen in assimilating literary and artistic references from the past in his work. For instance, he searched for examples in the miniature book *De natura rerum* (from 1450,

preserved in the University of Granada) to design "planistas" figures for the *Auto de Reyes Magos*, performed on *Teatro de Cachiporra* show) (Persia, 1993) (Soares, 2023). Inspired by medieval miniature sources, he created the parchment to commemorate the designation of Manuel de Falla as the opted Son of Granada. He developed conscientious historical research to put into scene Calderon's *Autos Sacramentales*, in 1927— that means the recovery of this Spanish set tradition since it was banned by Charles the Third (Gallego Morell, 1983); as well as for the staging of Curro Vargas in the National Lyric Theatre (1932); or the Lope de Vega's II Centenary of his death (1935) with the play *La moza de cántaro* and *La vuelta a Egipto* (Escoriza, 2022: 323-352).

Let's consider the primitivist features in the past and folklore inspirations shown by his puppetry and set designs. Two puppet shows are paradigmatic (Persia, 1993): The *Teatro de Cachiporra. Cristobica*, performed on January 6th, 1923, at García Lorca's home (Mora Guarnido, 1923), and the premier of Falla's *Retablo de Maese Pedro*, a musical and puppets arrangement inspired by one of *Quixote's* chapters, released on June 25th, 1923, in Paris, at the mansion of Princess of Polignac, the patron of this composition and the premier show (Sagardia, 1946: 48-49).

It is essential to consider these as collective initiatives, for several members of *El Rinconcillo* were involved in them. García Lorca, Lanz, and Falla were all three involved in *Teatro de Cachiporra*. Andrew Anderson recently highlighted an interplay of ideas and influences between Celso Lagar, Rafael Barradas, García Lorca, and Lanz, culminating in the *Cachiporra* show (Anderson, 2022).

Both the aforementioned plays can be seen as examples of primitivism, one that includes looking for local 'origins' and traditions for inspiration, as considered in the theoretical definition of 'primitive' given by Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten , and their critical approach of the diversity of its uses and abuses (1996). These include the recovery of folklore references —by rescuing the lost Andalusian puppet shows known as *Cristobicas*; the inspiration from the Spanish artistic and literary heritage—like the medieval miniature, Cervantes or King Alfonso X's *cantigas*; combined with an idea of 'purity' and primaeval knowledge associated to children's art to synthesise the style created for the set and puppets design. In these plays, using the past and the regenerative qualities of the 'primitive' to recover authenticity is crucial, adding to a full explanation of the idea of 'purity.'

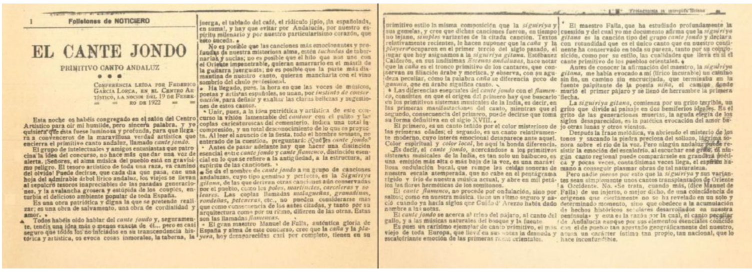
PRIMITIVISM, PURITY, AND FAITH

As stated before, scholars have mentioned the role of primitivism in Manuel de Falla's work. In his in-depth analysis, the musicologist Michael Christoforidis (2017: 88-100, 111-113, 121) argues that "orientalism had prefigured Falla's interest in primitivism during his Paris years." Indeed, Falla was involved with primitivist sources in Paris thanks to his contact with the *Apaches* circle -as he is considered a member of this group-, his relationship with Stravinsky -another *apache* member who was obsessed with *The Rite of Spring* and influenced Falla in order to compose *El amor brujo*-, and the impact of the Ballets Russes -as many of his members were actively engaged with Diaghilev's ballet from 1909, Falla as well. Then, Falla took advantage of these primitivist influences in order to use them as models for his new construction of flamenco and gypsies in *El amor brujo* (Christoforidis, 2017: 89-93).

Falla shared these cultural groundings, and when he moved permanently to Granada in 1920, they quickly spread among *El Rinconcillo's* fellows since the composer acted as a kind of mentor for many in the group—as a matter of fact, the painter Manuel Ángeles Ortiz addressed him as "father and supreme authority" (Rodrigo, 1984: 178). The primitivist references that Falla introduced to *El Rinconcillo* are clearly verifiable in one of the most relevant events organised by this cultural circle: the Cante Jondo Competition (*Concurso de Cante Jondo*). In 1922, Falla instigated and helped organise it in a collective venture that involved other *El Rinconcillo* members—including Lorca and Lanz—in the preservation of what they considered to be the "primitive" flamenco forms and "the pure Andalusian song" (Orozco 1999, 129). So, it is not in vain that the promoters constantly used the word 'primitive' to refer to *cante jondo*. Also, García Lorca delivered a lecture on 19 February 1922 entitled *El Cante Jondo. Primitivo canto Andaluz* (García Lorca, 1922),[12] in which he considered it an inspiration, "a pure source of renovation".

Therefore, it is possible to verify in Lorca's words the instance of the 'primitive' highlighted by Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten as positive valence, a rejuvenation through contact with social groups considered to be in an earlier stage of development (Antliff and Leighten, 1996). In the case of *Cante Jondo*, these were the poorest strata of society, especially the gipsy culture.

[12] The lecture's text was issued by installments in the newspaper *Noticiero granadino* in the following days.



Folletones de NOTICIERO

EL CANTE JONDO

PRIMITIVO CANTO ANDALUZ

Fig. 3 Lecture *El cante jondo. Primitivo cante andaluz* by f. G. Lorca, 1922, published on *Noticiero granadino*.

The notion of 'primitive' appears frequently associated with the idea of 'purity' in several texts and oral testimonies from *El Rinconcillo*'s fellows. Purity clearly refers to religious and Christian reminiscences, and it is mentioned in many aspects of the individual and collective initiatives developed by the group. In the light of the preceding, it is worth recalling the significance of *Teatro de Cachiporra*. The journalist José Mora Guarnido, also a member of the cultural group, referred to it as "pure art, old and modern, because in Spain we have forgotten so much of our pure ancient art, that any attempt to recover it is viewed by the masses with the strangeness with which one views the most daring novelty"[13] and "more modern in presentation and more spiritual in purpose. Schematic backgrounds, classical farces, synthetic music".[14]

The *Retablo de Maese Pedro* shares similar qualities, but unlike *Títeres de Cachiporra*, it reached a considerable European audience, its premiere in Paris being a success. Following the success of *Títeres de Cachiporra - Cristobica*, Falla asked Lanz to collaborate with him on the staging of *Retablo de Maese Pedro*, together with Manuel Ángeles Ortiz, another artist from *El Rinconcillo* (Castillo Higueras, 1994: 15).

Again, the significant fact on-topic is that the composer was again focused on the idea of 'purity'. As Falla himself explained in a letter to the Princess of Polignac, his "pure" music revived "that work lost for so many centuries" and "by reviving that body we thought to be dead, it reappears draped in all the magnificence and artifice accumulated over so many centuries" (Lahuerta, 2010: 38).

13 Mora Guarnido, José. 1923. "El teatro 'cachiporra' andaluz," *La Voz*, Madrid, January 12, 1923, p. 2. All translations from Spanish are mine.

14 Mora Guarnido, José. 1923. "Los bellos ejemplos. En Granada resucita el guignol," *La Esfera*, 475, Madrid, February, 10, 1923.

It is meaningful to recall that Guillaume Apollinaire defined l*a pureté* as one of the three main plastic virtues in his seminal text about *Cubism* (Apollinaire, 1913, 6). In fact, Hermenegildo Lanz taught a lecture on the same subject entitled *Velada Brumario* in 1928. A handwritten draft of the lecture has remained in his archive. There he quotes an extract of Apollinaire's text —translated into Spanish—referring to "the flame as a symbol of painting and this flame has the purity that suffers nothing foreign and cruelly transforms into itself what it reaches" (Escoriza, 2022: 258).

As mentioned above, this notion of purity can be linked to Christian reminiscences that must be regarded given Falla's solid Catholic beliefs. Christoforidis (2017: 195-209) has thoroughly analysed this fact, associating it with the composer's concept of creativity. Falla paralleled his religious convictions with a self-imposed sobriety that also determined his ideas about the artist's role. This religious question was also key in Lanz's personality and ethical values. Indeed, he considered the composer as an ethical example as well as a second father (Mata, 2003: 21). All in all, Lanz regarded himself as a "social Christian" (Mata, 2003: 121), and had numerous books on his shelves related to Christianism— for instance, *Catecismo del Santo Concilio de Trento para los párrocos*[15] (a compendium of Catholic doctrine commissioned during the Council of Trent, to improve the theological understanding of the clergy) or *La ciudad de Dios* by San Agustín[16] (*The city of God* by Augustine of Hippo) —and other religions, such as Buddhism. Furthermore, in 1928 Falla offered him a copy of Calderón de la Barca's *Autos Sacramentales* (a form of dramatic literature which is unique to Spain and Hispanic America that represented the mystery of the Eucharist), from 1759.[17]

Lanz's work as set designer for the performance of Calderon's *Autos Sacramentales* in Granada in 1927 was associated with this religious background. It was also organised collectively by many members of *El Rinconcillo*, including Ángel Barrios, Manuel de Falla, and Antonio Gallego Burín, Lanz being the main responsible for its visual conception (Mata, 2003: 34). The ideological

[15] 1785. *Catecismo del Santo Concilio de Trento para los párrocos ordenado por disposicion de San Pio V, traducido en lengua castellana por el P. Fr. Agustin Zorita, religioso dominico segun la impresion que de orden del Papa Clemente XIII se hizo en Roma año de 1761*. Madrid: Imprenta Real.

[16] San Agustín. 1922. *La ciudad de Dios*. Madrid: Sucesores de Hernando.

[17] Barca, C. de la. 1759. *Autos Sacramentales*. Madrid: Viuda de Don Manuel Fernández.

connotations of this venue must also be highlighted: they can be seen as foundations for the construction of the Francoist cultural symbols in Granada. In fact, *Autos Sacramentales* was played during the first decades of the Franco regime. Gallego Burín -art historian, curator and politician, who became major of Granada in 1938- would become very influential in the construction of its cultural and artistic imaginary, as he held the position of Chief of Fine Arts (Director General de Bellas Artes) in Franco's Government since 1951.

The performance in 1927 had national resonance, as the reviews of the event in several newspapers and magazines can prove (Diario *ABC*, 1927: 13; *Blanco y Negro*, 1927: 84; Leal, 1927, 10; Estévez -Ortega, 1927: 38; Nelken, 1927: 17; Espina, 1927: 5). Juan de la Encina, a prestigious art critic of the time, recognised Lanz as "one of the few modern stage designers, a genuine stage designer that we currently have in Spain" (De la Encina, 1927). Manuel Torres Molina's photographs taken of the stage captured simple-naive designs for the backdrop and other scenery elements. In addition, they show streamlined-renovated religious iconography that attests a modern quality to the synthetic process linked with the idea 'pure' art as one of the instances of primitivism.

Ignacio Henares, interpreted all these cultural events quoted in the previous paragraph following the model of the "correspondence of the arts" (Henares, 2014), so he considered that all the arts should aspire to achieve the purity and autonomy that could be found in music; to free themselves from the shackles of imitation, from subordination to any extra-artistic purpose. Correspondence is anti-content, and it does not mean sharing a theme; instead, it refers to the existence of a common poetic principle, except for the linguistic specificity of each of the arts. It constitutes the claim of an unbribable formal autonomy, of the autotelic nature of art, of the centrality of the creative function and the supremacy of the poetic imagination (Henares, 2014: 97). Henares chose "neopoularismo",[18] to refer to Cante Jondo Competition, and understood this trend concerning key aesthetic terms (purity and authenticity), "as the project of recovering what is authentically popular, *purifying* it of the casteist hindrance, in the search for its poetic *authenticity*" (Henares, 2014: 99).

[18] A term particularly used in Spanish literary historiography to describe a trend frequently linked to poets like Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, Dámaso Alonso, and many other poets included in the "Generación del 27".

REGENERACIONISMO AND PRIMITIVISM

One of the distinctive features of the Spanish dominant narrative during the 1920s is Regeneracionismo. This ideological trend implies a combination of attitudes and thoughts guided by pessimism after the loss of Spain's last colonies in 1898. It is focused on recovering traditions and a supposedly "glorious past", aspiring to improve unsolved Spanish imperialist issues to complete its unfinished modernisation (Saz, 2016).

Conversely, by recovering past episodes from Granada's culture, *El Rinconcillo* generated initiatives that took inspiration not from glorious events but from humble forgotten pages of the vernacular art and literature, or traditional pottery (Escoriza, 2007). Nonetheless, the presence of Manuel de Falla in Granada—together with new trends brought by locals travelling outside Granada, such as Lorca—contributed to add to *regeneracionismo* other ground-breaking features that can be considered instances of primitivism. Quoted episodes like *Títeres de Cachiporra* and the Cante Jondo Competition put forward a different way of looking for lost 'purity' extracted and recovered from the 'primitive' past, even if, in the end, they amount to the search for authenticity.

Fig. 4 Toy designed by H. Lanz. Archivo Lanz

To emphasise what has been said, paying attention to García Lorca's case is significant. His work was approached by several authors, focussing on its intertwining with issues related to primitivism, such as colonialism, imperialism, identity, nation, and marginalised social groups. For example, Megan Holt underlined that the vast majority of scholarship on *Romancero*

Gitano classifies Lorca as a regional poet, centring on his connection to Andalusia, except in the case of Egea Fernández-Montesinos who argues that Lorca's regionalism takes on a nationalistic dimension (Egea Fernández-Montesinos, 2000: 158-159). Supporting her argument, Holt cites a little-studied essay by Lorca entitled *El Patriotismo*, written in 1917 and published only in 1994 (García Lorca, 1994). In this essay, Lorca assumes a highly critical attitude towards patriotism, arguing that loyalty to one's country instilled since childhood does nothing but produce an empty sentiment. Instead of inspiring greatness, this sentiment leads to war, bloodshed and other forms of cruelty. Lorca suggests poets and other artists can offer salvation from this destructive patriotism (Holt, 2013: 141-142).

Holt has also studied the figure of Lorca alongside William Butler Yeats in a comparative studies approach, highlighting that both "respond to their respective nation's position as imperial subject and former coloniser by infusing their works with figures currently excluded from discussions about nationhood" and that they "attempt to forge a new national identity through these marginal figures" (Holt, 2013: 22-23). According to Holt, they "attempt to shape their nation in a way that, without denying the past, moves beyond a past shaped by imperial Powers and looks forward to a future shaped by those denied power under imperialism". Yeats did this through Irish mythology and Celtic legends, while Lorca turned to tradition and gipsy culture (Holt, 2013: 140).

Indeed, it is a recurring topic in research on Lorca to focus on the presence of the past and the vernacular and his inspiration in previously excluded themes and characters from the tradition, namely gipsy/Romani culture. Lorca himself, in an interview published in *La Gaceta Literaria* on 15 January 1931, stated:

> I believe that being from Granada inclines me to a sympathetic understanding of the prosecuted. Of the gipsy, the black, the Jew..., of the Moorish that we all carry within us. Granada smells of mystery, of something that cannot be and yet is.[19]

CHILDREN'S ART, TEACHING, AND COMMUNITY PEDAGOGY

Many modern and avant-garde experiences have to deal with play and youthfulness. The attention to children's art and behaviour is another example of the modern attitude that pays attention to

[19] *Gaceta Literaria*, January 15, 1931. Madrid.

marginalised groups, as those previously mentioned for Lorca or Yeats. This acquires a particular meaning as far as Spain is concerned because this phenomenon had to do with the severe lack of alphabetisation of Spanish society and the initiatives towards its mitigation. Thus, one of the concerns for *Regeneracionismo* was to solve this scourge, which the Republican government subsequently embraced, as analphabetism was considered one of the main issues of Spanish society at the beginning of this political period. Two crucial instruments for fighting illiteracy were the so-called *Las misiones pedagógicas* (Pedagogical Missions) and *La Barraca*, both of which had Lanz involved, accompanying the theatrical groups during their journeys to Becerril de la Sierra (Madrid) and Almazán (Segovia) and taking photos from them. He even planned to develop a *Barraca de Arte* (Art Hut) in Granada when he played the role of President of the Ateneo de Granada in 1931.

Lanz's case is exemplary because, besides valuing children as a marginalised group, as many other modern intellectuals and artists did, he also used what he believed were the revitalising qualities of children's art for educational purposes.

Due to Lanz's activity as a drawing teacher, children's art became a bedrock for his creative conception. It also had a noteworthy impact on his overall activities as a cultural actor in Granada—for instance, his duties as President of the Ateneo de Granada in 1931, during the Second Spanish Republic.

Lanz's archive preserves many children's drawings that he collected. A coloured pencil drawing from 1923 by a child was carefully preserved. In the same year *Títeres de Cachiporra* was played, it is clear that children's art played an important role in Lanz's stage design, folk art, and cubism—especially in his puppets' heads- executed through faceting forms.

Concerning the 'primitive' force of children's art, we must recall that playing and youthfulness were some of the tremendous renovating qualities of modernity. Juan José Lahuerta (2010: 32) has analysed this accurately in relation to the student atmosphere of the *Residencia de Estudiantes* and the Bauhaus (profusely documented by spontaneous photographs), recalling that the ideology of the latest—and also avant-garde in a general sense —assumes that modernity is synonymous with youth and uninhibited joy, as much as formal experimentation is synonymous of social revolution. Valuing playing will become evident in Lanz's work through puppets and manufactured toys, such as *El cuarteto del velero*. These were made in different formats and materials and accompanied by innumerable sketches. Lanz

also gave great importance to playbooks, such as the one given by Manuel de Falla to his children (*Trabajos Manuales y Juegos infantiles*) and a large number of books on children's tales from all cultural backgrounds.

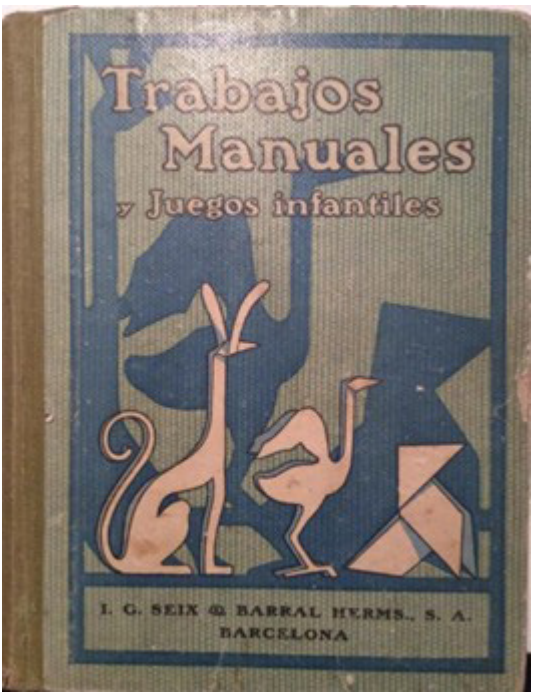


Fig. 5 Book *Trabajos Manuales y Juegos infantiles* gifted by Falla to Lanz. Archivo Lanz.

In addition, Lanz's attention to children was also present in his political activity. As a member of the "Section for the Promotion and Defence of the Rights of the Child", a committee that was part of the Centro Artístico of Granada, he dedicated himself to defending children's rights. Lanz's compromise with the defence of children's art is further emphasised by the fact that he installed a drawing by his son, Gildito, in a scenery scale model for the *Regional Exhibition of Modern Art* in the Casa de los Tiros, in 1929. This active involvement in civic movements was part and parcel of his project and contemporaneous to his position as President of the Ateneo de Granada. It is in this light that the decision to set up a *Barraca de Arte* (Art Hut) in Granada, in a formula that would be soon after popularised by Lorca in 1932, must be understood (Escoriza, 2019: 401-402).

Lanz's concern about pedagogy is also made clear by the books in his library on the subject —by Froebel, Tomas Arnold, W. A. Lay, Artus-Perrelet, and Mallard y Cutó, as well as many others specialising in drawing teaching. Even his pedagogical passion was a commitment to public education, which was evident in his work as a public lecturer. For example, in December 1931, he taught a lecture entitled *The Value of Drawing in Social Education* and *Artistic Activity in Schools*.[20] A manuscript note by Lanz, kept in a book of his library, illustrates his desire to participate in a local broadcast: "My aim is none other than to collaborate in the work that Radio Granada wants to initiate and for this, I offered to give one or more conferences on Art and Pedagogical Missions, addressing the issues, preferably with a popular character but without the slightest political sense" (Escoriza, 2022: 245-246).

Finally, another interesting case related to the topic of marginalised groups and children is the reprisal Lanz suffered during Franco's regime. In order to avoid censorship control, Lanz personified himself as a circus puppet, called *Totolín*, to express his opinions and state of mind through a series of fictional missives sent to the real literary critic Antonio Covaleda, that appeared in the magazine *La Estafeta Literaria* (García, 2019).

SIGNIFICANT GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

In general terms, international studies (and even some Spanish) have considered Spain and the city of Granada as a stagnant scenario excluded from the Western canon of Modernism. Granada's cultural life was regarded as incapable of keeping pace, in line with the concept of delay pointed out by scholars like Vlachou (Vlachou, 2016), and as being alien to the most advanced trends in Western world. However, since the end of the 1980s, thanks to new studies based on new historiographical perspectives,[21] Spain was included in it.

Framed according to the new historiographical approach, *El Rinconcillo* case study focused on Lanz is significant as it discloses diverse circumstances crucial to the construction of a revised narrative of Modernism.

[20] Manuscript kept in the Archivo Lanz.

[21] Mainly, but not only we are referring to the following texts: (Godzich, 1989), (Geist and Moleón, 1999), (Bretz 2001), (Bonaddio, 2003), (Mendelson 2005), (Soufas 2007 2011), (Gregori and Herrero-Senés, 2016), (Christoforidis, 1997, 2018).

The peculiarities of Modernism in Spain are usually explained by the argument of "being between tradition and avant-garde" (*entre tradición y vanguardia*), as C.C. Soufas outlined:

> Since Spanish literary critics have not yet fully embraced the concept of a multi-faceted international literary and artistic modernist movement in which Spain is an integral part, what emerged in their work is a bifurcated approach to much of the writing during this period that often understands Spanish writers, and especially the poets of 1927, as "entre la tradición y la vanguardia" (Soufas, 2007: 15).

However, in his well-known introduction to the concept of 'Modern', David Cottington argues that tradition was clearly aligned with modernism: "Nor does modernism necessarily entail experimentation with *new* forms and conventions, and to juxtapose those against current practices. At the start of the twentieth century, this was done across the western world, and across the arts by artists who turned to the folk arts and vernacular traditions of their national country" (Cottington, 2005: 13).

The peculiarities of Spanish Modernism in this global turning to vernacular tradition went through the pessimism provoked by the 'disaster' of losing the colonies in 1898—mainly in the *Generación del 98*—and the patriotically traditionalist reformism inherited by *Regeneracionismo*. As Holt sums up, the anxiety about the lost empire and nationhood was connected with the desire to socially and culturally regenerate the country by learning the lesson from a glorious Spanish past (Holt, 2013: 16-17).

CONCLUSIONS

The polarity pointed out by Soufas, provokes an inaccurate comprehension of the real complexity of Modernism in Spain and the case addressed in this chapter. Thus, it must be reviewed considering that tradition does not necessarily imply a conservative emulation of the past. Still, rather it can imply renovating trends that can be understood under the framework of primitivism. The case of *El Rinconcillo* is paradigmatic.

The 1898's anxiety— revealed collectively and subjectively— was displayed in the adherence to spirituality, especially Catholic principles, and the search for 'purity' demonstrated by Spanish intellectuals like Falla and Lanz. That could explain how this way of living and thinking—at first sight, as classifiable conservative from our contemporary point of view, mainly because of the strong foundation on Catholic ideology that featured Francoist

regime—produced episodes considered at his own time innovative, as the contemporary press quoted earlier demonstrates for *Autos Sacramentales* case in 1927.

Furthermore, this is a specific case that deserves to be included in a global narrative because, framed into the particular political situation of the Second Spanish Republic and its utopian educational efforts, it confirmed the importance children's art played as a source for renovation during these decades. Initiatives like the *Barraca* and *Misiones Pedagógicas* are key episodes in Spanish modernism. Moreover, the case of Granada and Lanz—and the "barraca" that the *Ateneo de Granada* tried to put together —help us to understand a general phenomenon that thrived around the country broadly.

Likewise, Lanz's account is relevant to understanding the renovation of the arts through the multiple artistic practices that he cultivated and learned through his acquaintances and his peculiar library. His academic artistic skills enabled him to develop diverse artistic trends—synthetism, primitivism, realism, Symbolism, functionalism, Art déco, and cubism. In that sense, it must be argued that artists like him must be considered in order to build new narratives of modernism.

To conclude, all these peculiarities present in Granada from the 1920s until the beginning of the Spanish Civil War are a sort of the epitome of the peculiar process of formation of modernism and modernity in a local scenario. Viewed from the perspective of primitivism— understood as a practice that uses past and tradition as a resource for innovation— the case discussed can contribute to building the new map that testifies and explains the complexity of modernism in the periphery, and bypasses the polar narrative based on the notion of delay in comparison to a central canon.

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UNKNOWN LANDSCAPES OF *BURNING DEPTHS*. PSYCHOGEOLOGY AND 'PRIMITIVISM' IN CANARIAN MODERNISM

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ABSTRACT

This text analyses the uses that Canarian modernism made of the simile between the psychoanalytic technique and the metaphor of archaeological stratigraphy, applied to the geological context of the islands, through the concept of 'psychogeology' as a method of individual and collective unconscious knowledge. This concept, developed by the poet Domingo López in an article published in the magazine *Gaceta de arte*, allows us to understand how the ideas of psychoanalytic origin linked to the poetics of surrealism circulated among the French and Canary Island groups. This is a good example for understanding the development of global surrealism.

The combination of psychoanalytic, poetic and artistic techniques will also serve to interpret the Guanche material culture, the 'primitive' Canarian culture. In this text, we will focus on Óscar Domínguez's painting *Guanches' Cave* (1935), applying a methodology based on psychoanalytical theory and the role that 'primitivism' played within it.

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INTRODUCTION

December 25, 2021. Eighty-five days after its eruption, the volcano on the island of La Palma ended its activity (Fig. 1). The lava destroyed houses, roads, banana plantations... In short, it destroyed the world as the island's inhabitants knew it. In its place, a new landscape has appeared, the result of the volcanic tubes and the lava that reached the sea. It is an unknown landscape, from which new plants will sprout and on which humans will construct new buildings and roads. It is a new landscape from which we do not know if new worlds will emerge.

Fig. 1 La Palma volcano erupting. December 2021.

One of the analogies used by Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, to explain the psychoanalytic method was archaeology. From the first texts, such as *Studies on Hysteria* (1895, with Joseph Breuer), and the analysis of some cases, such as Jensen's novel *Gradiva* (1907)[2] (Cuevas 2018), to some of his last texts, such as *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), the Viennese psychoanalyst established a comparison between archaeology and psychoanalysis based on which the archaeologist studied the different historical stratigraphies in a similar way in which the psychoanalyst intervened in the various psychic stratigraphies of a person.

This metaphor allowed Freud to explain to those less familiar with psychoanalysis the structure and functioning of the psychic

[2] We have analysed the epistemological affinities between psychoanalytic theory and Art History through Freud's *Gradiva* and Aby Warburg's *Nymph* in Cuevas, 2018.

apparatus, and the possibility of analysing the experiences of a subject's adult life through the different psychic stratigraphies (adolescence, puberty, childhood), and, through the method based on the talking cure, to resolve different symptoms or neuroses[3].

Around 1912 and 1913, Freud and Carl Gustav Jung split over the definition of the unconscious. The first understood it individually, while Jung understood it collectively. This issue is crucial for understanding the later development of the psychoanalytic movement, and in particular, the issue we are discussing, since Jung would apply the archaeological metaphor to his definition of the collective unconscious. Therefore, the psychoanalytic method had the capacity to penetrate and know the collective unconscious of a culture, that is, its most ancient or primitive stratum.

Despite the breakup, in those years, both were working on the same issue: Freud in texts such as *Totem and Tabu: Resemblances Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics* (originally published in German in 1913), and Jung published this in texts such as *On the Unconscious* (1918), while he was working at the Burghölzli psychiatric hospital in Zurich. Jung acknowledged that Freud had discovered a collective archetype, the Oedipus complex, but it was the first and only one he discovered (Carr, 2002).

PSYCHOGEOLOGY OF SURREALISM. THE RECEPTION OF PSYCHOANALYTICAL IDEAS IN CANARIAN MODERNISM: *GACETA DE ARTE* AND DOMINGO LÓPEZ TORRES

A good example of the reception of psychoanalytical ideas in Canarian modernism[4] is the concept of psychogeology, defined by the avant-garde writer Domingo López Torres in the article 'Psychogeology of Surrealism', published in the journal *Gaceta de arte* (López Torres 1933) (Fig. 2). As we shall see further on, López Torres's interpretation of Paul Éluard's poetry is a good example to understand the psychogeological interpretation that the Canarian avant-garde had of French surrealist poetry and

[3] Freud's use of the archaeological metaphor as a simile for the psychoanalyst's work with the unconscious has been widely studied. We refer to the texts by Donald Kuspit (1989) and Griselda Pollock (2006).

[4] We refer to Canarian modernism because, although the spirit of the journal *Gaceta de arte* and its members was clearly international, the volcanic peculiarity of the Canarian landscape defined some specific aspects of this avant-garde.

psychoanalytical theory. But before going into the content of this article, it is essential to know the importance that the magazine *Gaceta de arte* had in the panorama of the Spanish and European avant-garde movements.

g. a. y sus notas

psicogeología del surrealismo

Fig. 2 Domingo López Torres. "Psicogeología del Surrealismo". *Gaceta de arte*, n. 13, march 1933.

Gaceta de arte was published in Tenerife between 1932 and 1936. It was promoted by Eduardo Westerdahl and was one of the most important cultural journals of the Second Spanish Republic. In fact, the triumph of the Second Spanish Republic in April 1931 was a spur, for which Westerdahl and his fellow adventurers wanted to design a modern profile of civility, which not only had to transform thought, architecture, arts and literature, but also artistic pedagogy, university teaching and even everyday objects. As Westerdahl himself points out, *Gaceta de arte* was "a magazine of information and positive criticism of what we understood as the ordering of society, following the establishment of a different regime in which, with a certain youthful naivety, we believed" (Westerdahl 1981, XI).

The journal *Gaceta de arte* published texts by writers and artists from the Canarian avant-garde, but also from the Peninsula, such as GATEPAC and ADLAN, as well as from

European modernism, such as Gertrude Stein, Le Corbusier, Alfred H. Barr and Kandinsky. This fact, together with the study trip Westerdahl made to some European cities like Paris, Berlin, Dessau, Frankfurt and Prague, demonstrates the pro-European orientation of the journal. During his trip, Westerdahl knew the aesthetic and social efficacy of Le Corbusier's architectural rationalism and Ozenfant's purism ("l'esprit nouveau"), the functionalism of Bauhaus productions, and the pictorial abstraction of Klee, Kandinsky and Baumeister. The journal had a universal aspiration, contrary to nationalism and regionalism.

Gaceta de arte had a wide circulation due to subscriptions, but also because it was sent to universities, cultural centres, museums and art galleries in various countries. This facilitated a large correspondence with artists such as Kandinsky, Miró, Breton and Arp, although other artists such as Picasso and Paul Klee, or Sigmund Freud himself, did not acknowledge receiving the journal (Westerdahl 1981, X). Sending it to the Viennese psychoanalyst demonstrates the interest and appreciation that these artists, writers and intellectuals had for psychoanalytic thought. In fact, in the early 1920s, the complete works of Sigmund Freud were published in Spanish, translated by José Luis López Ballesteros, a publishing project promoted by the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, which had an enormous influence in the context of the Iberian artistic avant-garde, especially in the *Residencia de Estudiantes* of Madrid[5], where Salvador Dalí, Federico García Lorca and Luis Buñuel, among others, were present.

The presence of artists linked to surrealism, such as André Breton[6] who, thanks to the ties he had with Óscar Domínguez

[5] There are several cultural institutions that are fundamental to understand the development of avant-garde ideas in Spain during the first third of the twentieth century. Among them we should highlight the Student Residence (Residencia de Estudiantes), founded in Madrid in 1910, that became one of the most important cultural institutions of Spain until 1936. The influence of Freudian ideas on artists of the Student Residence, such as Salvador Dalí, has been extensively studied by authors such as Santos Torroella, 1984. Another important institution was the Ladies Residence (Residencia de Señoritas), the first official centre for the promotion of university education for women in Spain. It was directed by the institutionist educator María de Maeztu from its creation in 1915, but ceased to function in 1939 after the end of the Spanish civil war. Among her teachers were María Zambrano, Maruja Mallo and Victorina Durán. The Women Lyceum Club and the Women's University Association were born in its halls. On the occasion of the centenary of its creation, an exhibition was held that brought together the latest research on the central role that the Ladies Residence played in the development of the avant-garde in Spain, to which we refer: De la Cueva and Márquez, 2015.

[6] As it is well known, many surrealist artists were more or less directly involved in the First World War. André Breton, who had studied medicine, was

and the poet Domingo López Torres, travelled to the island of Tenerife in 1935 together with Jacqueline Lamba and Benjamin Péret, deserves special mention due to its importance[7]. Domínguez had been linked to the French surrealist group since 1933-34. Breton and Domínguez met at the café in the Place Blanche in Paris, where the surrealist group met regularly. This relationship had a double effect. On the one hand, Domínguez transmitted his interest in surrealism to his Tenerife colleagues through all the news he sent them (and that was published in the journal), and, on the other, he also transmitted his interest in Tenerife to Breton, Lamba and Péret. During their presence on the island, they visited many of its most picturesque places, like the Botanic Garden of La Orotava and climbed the Teide in fascination, which Breton wrote about in *L'Amour fou* (written between 1934 and 1936, published in 1937). There, he wrote: "The peak of Teide in Tenerife is made of the lightning of the small pignard" (Morris 1979). However, the two most important aspects of the presence of Breton, Lamba and Péret in Tenerife were the organisation of the International Exhibition of Surrealism of 1935, which included works by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Óscar Domínguez, Hans Arp, Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst, René Magritte, Man Ray and Yves Tanguy, and the publication of the *International Bulletin of Surrealism in Tenerife* (October 1935). This was one of the four published issues of the *International Bulletin of Surrealism*. In addition to the one published in Tenerife, others were published in Prague (April 1935), Brussels (August 1935) and London (September 1936), the latter coinciding with the organisation of the International Surrealist Exhibition in London (June-July 1936).

Although *Gaceta de arte* was not a surrealist magazine, it is evident that surrealism was the avant-garde that most influenced it. Specifically, issues 35 and 36 alone would make the magazine the one that showed the most understanding and enthusiasm for that movement in Spain. Issue 35 (September 1935) documents the visit of the surrealist group to Tenerife. It also published texts by André Breton, Paul Éluard and Salvador Dalí, among others;. In contrast, issue 36 featured reproductions of

assigned to the Military Hospital of Nantes and later to the psychiatric centre of Saint-Dizier, where soldiers at the front suffering from acute delirium were transferred, allowing the artist to experiment with psychoanalytic procedures such as the interpretation of dreams and the free association of ideas (Cuevas, 2013).

[7] The trip of Breton, Lamba and Péret to Tenerife in 1935 is described in detail in Pérez Minik, 1975.

works by artists such as the Uruguayan Joaquín Torres García, and texts by Hans Arp, Benjamin Péret, Paul Éluard, Anatole Jakovski, Eduardo Westerdahl and Domingo Pérez Minik were published.

To understand the complex relationship between Óscar Domínguez and *Gaceta de arte*, we must take into account the figure of Domingo López Torres, a writer and critic who was one of the founding members of the journal, in which throughout the 1930s he published highly insightful essays on surrealism's political aesthetics. López Torres was a socialist whose ideas matured through his contact with surrealism into a profound and flexible understanding of the problems faced by his country in the 1930s.

In an article entitled "Psychogeology of Surrealism", the poet Domingo López Torres explains the origin of psychoanalysis linked to the work of Mesmer, Charcot and Freud (López Torres 1933)[8]. The poet says, "With Freud begins the simplest procedure of psychic analysis: the interpretation of dreams" (López Torres 1933, 3). In his description of the dream process, López explains that "the subconscious projects the infinite stored impressions, dark, stagnant waters in deep sewers of oblivion, in incomprehensible images – without colours, intoned on a single scale that goes from black to white, like the cinema – which must be interpreted" (López Torres 1933, 3)[9].

We can understand López's poetic interpretation of the Freudian dream construction process through these words. First, López, like almost all surrealist artists and writers, uses the word 'subconscious', a term rejected by Freud in favour of the term "unconscious". The prefix 'sub' implies 'below', while for Freud, the unconscious is not below anything but manifests itself directly and continuously[10]. Secondly, the 'subconscious' defined by López Torres is projected into "incomprehensible images" (described poetically as "dark, stagnant waters in deep oblivion

[8] In issue 9 (October 1932), López Torres published the article "Surrealism and Revolution", illustrated with works by Salvador Dalí (*The Great Masturbator*) and Óscar Domínguez (*Dream* and *Paris' Souvenir*) and the "Poem of the lobster".

[9] Spanish version: "durante el sueño el subconsciente va proyectando las infinitas impresiones almacenadas, oscuras aguas estancadas en profundas alcantarillas de olvido, en imágenes incomprensibles, – sin colores, entonada en la sola escala que va del blanco al negro, como el cine – que es necesario interpretar".

[10] Although López Torres and many of the surrealist poets use the term "subconscious", we must remember that Freud rejected it since "only the word 'unconscious' can indicate, by the negation it contains, the topical split between two psychic territories and the qualitative distinction of the processes that take place within it" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1996, p. 415).

sewers") that must be interpreted. That is to say, the work of the psychoanalyst is a poetic work that consists of interpreting these "incomprehensible images", a work that López, like many other writers, poets and artists of surrealism, understands to be the basis of the creative process. However, in these words we find a difference between López's way of understanding the subconscious and that of psychoanalysis. For López, the subconscious is projected into images, while the psychoanalyst works with images translated into words. That is, the interpretation is based on the words that describe the dream images. Lastly, we consider the analogy that López establishes between dream images and cinematographic images to be of great relevance. Then, he adds: "in the dark of the night, on the black screen of sleep". In other words, the images that occur during sleep, "in the dark of the night", are assimilated to the cinematographic experience. Entering a movie theatre in the dark and seeing the images of a movie would be an experience similar to the oneiric experience.

Lopez goes on to say that "so immense is the field of the spirit that all those who travel through it have suddenly found themselves before completely *unknown landscapes*[11], so vast that they are impotent to grasp" (López Torres 1933, 3)[12]. López's words raise some immediate questions: How can we capture these vast and *unknown landscapes*? On the other hand, we consider that the term "impotent" used by López is not accidental, as it has a clear sexual connotation. That is to say, the inability or "impotence" to grasp the grandeur or enormity of these *unknown landscapes* would be related to sexual impotence.

In order to grasp these vast and *unknown landscapes*, López continues:

> "Freud found himself involved, when he least expected it, in the enormous world of sex, without being able to glimpse its boundaries. An unexplored world, absent from any scientific chart, in the north of his investigations. Navigating through it, subject to analysis, he was able to support his entire theory by going to that cynical extreme (for academics) in which it is shown that man from his prehistory comes wrapped in the deep stigma of the libido" (López Torres 1933, 3)[13].

[11] The italics are mine.

[12] Spanish version: "es tan inmenso el campo del espíritu que todos los que discurren por él se han encontrado de pronto ante paisajes completamente desconocidos, tan vastos que son impotentes para captarlos".

[13] Spanish version: "Freud se vio, cuando menos lo pensaba, envuelto en el enorme mundo del sexo, sin poder otear sus linderos. Un mundo inexplorado, ausente en toda carta científica, en el norte de sus investigaciones. Navegando por él, sujeto al análisis, fue capaz de soportar toda su teoría llegando hasta

This paragraph demonstrates the knowledge and interest that the Canarian poet had in the Freudian theory of sexuality in which libido, a term used to describe the dynamic manifestations of sexuality, played a central role. In fact, in the words of López, this "enormous world of sex", this "unexplored world" full of "unknown landscapes", was navigated by Freud through a theory that demonstrates that man has been involved since prehistory in the libido.

In his article, López Torres points out the coincidence between "the Freudian theories that claim that individual psychic expression is increasingly necessary as an inimitable and unique expression of personality" and "the moment when impressionism reached its peak and art began to plunge down the slope of expressionism" (López Torres 1933,3)[14]. According to the poet from the Canary Islands, "Dalí, Miró and Max Ernst bring an enormous documentary of their respective underground research. Breton, Aragon, Tzara, Éluard (poetry has always been introduced through all the chinks in science) the most interesting interior annotations" (López Torres 1933, 3)[15]. Finally, López Torres points out that "the talent of the French surrealist movement lays in having connected psychoanalytic research with the materialist concept of history and the Marxist theory of knowledge" (López Torres 1933, 3). Those *unknown landscapes* to which López Torres refers are unconscious and surreal landscapes, in which psychoanalysis and Marxism merge to create an artistic and poetic whole that is both psychic and political, social and historical—surrealism in the service of the revolution.

López Torres's article ends by highlighting the texts of three surrealist poets: Breton, Éluard and Tzara. Of the former, he mentions the recent publication of his book *Les Vases Communicants* (*Communicating Vessels*) (1932), of which he says that "for the innumerable landscapes it uncovers, it deserves to be inspected and studied in all its corners" (López Torres 1933, 3)[16]. Breton

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aquel extremo cínico (para los académicos) en que se demuestra que el hombre desde su prehistoria viene envuelto en el estigma profundo de la libido".

[14] Spanish version: "las teorías freudianas que afirman ser cada día más necesaria la expresión individual psíquica como inimitable y única exacta expresión de la personalidad" y "el momento en que el impresionismo llega a la cima y comienza a precipitarse el arte por la pendiente del expresionismo".

[15] Spanish version: "Dalí, Miró y Max Ernst traen un enorme documental de sus respectivas investigaciones subterráneas. Breton, Aragón, Tzara, Éluard (la poesía se ha introducido siempre por todos los resquicios de la ciencia) las anotaciones interiores más interesantes".

[16] Spanish version: "por los innumerables paisajes que descubre, merece ser inspeccionado y estudiado en todas sus esquinas".

uses the metaphor of communicating vessels to express the communication between the interior and the exterior, between wakefulness and sleep, between madness and reason, and between psychoanalysis and Marxism. Those communicating vessels would allow the emergence of a new world, an *unknown landscape*, the result of the surreal experience.

The commentary on Éluard is related to the recent publication of the collection of poems *Comme deux gouttes d'eau* (*Like Two Drops of Water*) (1933). López says, "Paul Éluard is the first French surrealist poet, the one who has been able to penetrate most deeply through the chinks of consciousness to *the burning depths of the subconscious*" (López Torres 1933, 3)[17]. This commentary on Éluard's poetry is a good example of the Canarian avant-garde's psychogeological reading of French surrealist poetry and psychoanalytical theory. For López Torres, the subconscious is thought of as the deep and scorching interior of a *volcano landscape*, and poetry is the best way to access its interior. While for Freud, the best way (via regia) to the unconscious was dreams and the psychoanalytic technique was the right way to interpret them, for López Torres, the main road to the subconscious was poetry and the surrealist poets, especially Paul Éluard, were its best interpreters.

Finally, the commentary on Tzara is shorter. López Torres mentions the recent publication of *L'Antitête* (*Antihead*) (1933) and highlights the critical review that René Crevel had published in *Gaceta de arte* (Crevel 1933). In his text, Crevel includes some verses by Tzara, such as "the serenity of the volcano cannot be judged" ("la sérénité du volcan ne se juge pas")[18]. And, later, "final *despair*[19], with its lava, will revive the universe. Dream, reality, are dragged, mixed, merged" (Crevel 1933)[20].

These verses by Tzara, collected in Crevel's text, demonstrate the Romanian poet's influence on López Torres and his definition of psychogeology. These metaphors that refer to the volcanic and "despair" understood as lava that will devastate the "known

[17] Spanish version: "es Paul Éluard el primer poeta surrealista francés, el que más profundamente ha podido penetrar por los resquicios del consciente a las profundidades abrasadoras del subconsciente".

[18] This verse is part of poem XVIII of *Minuits pour Géants* and says: "Mais la révolte couve plus âpre et tendue sous l'herbage clair et la sérénité du volcan ne se juge pas" (Tzara, 2011, p. 541).

[19] Reference to Tzara's poem titled "Le désespéranto" (Tzara, 2011, pp. 545-577).

[20] The original text of Crevel, in French, reads: "le *desespéranto* final va, de sa lave, rallumer l'univers. rêve, réalité se trouvent entraînés, mêlés, fondus" (Crevel, 1933).

world", mixing dream and reality, were fundamental for the interpretation that López Torres made of *unknown landscapes* as volcanic landscapes, interior and exterior, unconscious and surreal, similar to the volcanic landscape of the Canary Islands and that would arise with the eruption of a volcano and the transformation of the landscape through the path of lava.

As we have seen, the concept of psychogeology defined by López Torres has a clear psychoanalytical basis: the Freudian theory of sexuality and the texts of Breton, Éluard and Tzara.

THE PSYCHOANALYTIC METAPHOR OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND GEOLOGICAL STRATIGRAPHY AND 'PRIMITIVISM' IN ÓSCAR DOMÍNGUEZ

López Torres is not the only one to relate surrealist theory with the modern theories of psychoanalysis and the geological processes derived from the volcanic activity of the islands; in fact, this is a common theme when defining the avant-garde from the islands' territory. Óscar Domínguez was another of the artists who used the psychoanalytical and surreal metaphor of archaeological and geological stratigraphy to interpret the landscape of the Canary Islands and their historical and cultural sediments. To do so, he employed different concepts and techniques, such as 'lithochronism' and the solidification of time, and 'decalcomania.'

'Lithochronism' is a concept defined by Óscar Domínguez and the Argentine novelist, painter and physicist Ernesto Sábato, which consists of the search for the representation of time on the pictorial surface. In an article published in *Minotaure*, Breton refers to Dominguez's lithochronism, a mechanism defined by the petrification of time, and which was illustrated in Dominguez's work *Lancelot* (Breton 1939). Dominguez's works on the lithochronic period refer to the volcanic landscapes and lava rivers of Tenerife. According to Breton, "some surfaces, which we call lithochronic, open a window onto the strange world of the fourth dimension" (Breton 1939). Ernesto Sábato was familiar with Einstein's theory of relativity and, together with Domínguez, intended, through lithochronism, to open the floodgates of *unknown landscapes*. As Nilo Palenzuela points out, "the poetic character is the most outstanding feature of Óscar Domínguez's lithochronic works which, as in the decalcomanies, move and awaken his deep bond with his Canary Island ancestors, his most instinctive relationship with the landscapes

of his childhood" (Palenzuela 1999)[21]. Therefore, according to Palenzuela's interpretation, Domínguez's lithochronic technique allows him to remember the landscapes of his childhood but also to connect with the Canarian cultural ancestors, that is, with the Guanche culture, the 'primitive' Canarian culture.

The technique of 'decalcomania' refers to the geological transformation processes that were known to him thanks to the proximity of the Teide volcano. "Decalcomania without a preconceived object" or "decalcomania of desire" is a technique that consists of applying stains of ink, watercolour or gouache to a sheet of paper, and after pressing the folded sheet with the hand, spontaneous results are obtained, the fruit of chance, and which Domínguez associated with the volcanic landscapes of Tenerife. Decalcomania is a good example of the application of psychoanalytical techniques, such as the free association of ideas to the process of artistic creation[22]. If the free association of ideas, as well as the interpretation of dreams, were considered by psychoanalysis as ways of gaining knowledge of the unconscious (individual in the case of Freud, collective in the case of Jung), techniques such as decalcomania allowed access, through artistic processes, to the unconscious, to those *unknown landscapes*, both individual (childhood experiences) and collective (cultural traditions of the past, in the case of the Canary Islands, that of the 'primitive' Guanches).

However, beyond the use of concepts and techniques such as lithochronism and decalcomania, we are going to focus on the use that Óscar Domínguez made of the psychoanalytic metaphor of archaeological and geological stratigraphy to allude to the 'primitive' Canarian culture, the Guanches[23]. A good example

[21] Spanish version: "el carácter poético es lo más destacado de las obras litocrónicas de Óscar Domínguez que, como en las decalcomanías, mueven y despiertan su vínculo profundo con los ancestros canarios, su relación más instintiva con los paisajes de su infancia" (Palenzuela, 1999).

[22] According to Freud, the process of dream elaboration is based on two principles: condensation and displacement. Jacques Lacan's theoretical reworking of psychoanalysis based on the contributions of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic structuralism led him to think of the construction of subjectivity as a linguistic construction. In this sense, the principles of condensation and displacement would be linguistic principles associated with metonymy and metaphor. We have delved into the structural coincidences between the Freudian process of oneiric elaboration and the creative process of certain images of avant-garde artists, such as Picasso in Cuevas, 2020.

[23] In this text we will refer indistinctly to Guanches, 'primitive' Canarians or ancient Canarians, as if they were synonyms. Currently, the DRAE (Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy of the Language) accepts the use of the term "Guanche" for the inhabitants of the whole archipelago, although from a strictly

is the work by the painter Óscar Domínguez, *Guanches' Cave* (1935, MNCA Reina Sofía, Madrid) (Fig. 3). This painting was exhibited in the Second International Exhibition of Surrealism in 1935 and belonged to the poet Pedro García Cabrera, secretary and co-founder of *Gaceta de arte*. After García Cabrera, the painting belonged to Aurelio Biosca, before entering Madrid's Reina Sofía Museum collection.

Fig. 3 Óscar Domínguez. *Cueva de guanches*. 1935. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

The canvas has a rectangular format that can be roughly divided into three parts. In the upper third of the canvas, we can see the figure of a fisherman holding a fishing rod. This figure has usually been interpreted as a self-reference of Domínguez himself. Next to him there is a can opener, a symbolic element that would allow the underworld represented in the lower two-thirds of the painting to be opened. The central and lower part

scientific point of view, they were only the inhabitants of the island of Tenerife. From a historical point of view, we are referring to the inhabitants of the Canary Islands before the Castilian conquest in the fifteenth century.

of the canvas is occupied by the different archaeological and geological stratigraphies on a black background, composed of soft bodies and faces that in turn are transformed and make up a landscape reminiscent of the Canary Islands, *visions of the unconscious* in which the schematic figure of a Canary Island aborigine can be identified.

Interpretations of this painting tend to agree on several issues. Firstly, the formal division of the painting would allude to two different planes: the rational part, the "ego", would be at the top, while the lower part would correspond to the unconscious. The allusion to archaeological and geological stratigraphy would be a clear reference to the archaeological metaphor Sigmund Freud used to define the unconscious and the work of the psychoanalyst. As we have seen in the case of López Torres, the Canary Islands avant-garde adapted certain metaphors that circulated in French surrealist groups to the artistic, cultural and geographical context of the Canary Islands. One such metaphor was the one that imagined the unconscious as an archaeological stratigraphy, which was adapted to the volcanic landscape of the Canary Islands. While in Europe, the unconscious was assimilated to an archaeological site, in the Canary Islands, it was a geological landscape defined by the volcanic nature of the islands.

The allusion to the archaeological and geological metaphor is reinforced by the title of the painting: *Guanches' Cave*. This title refers to the artist's childhood memory, when he used to visit the excavated caves in the north of the island, where remains of the Guanche culture, the island's aboriginal culture, were found. One of these caves, Guayonge, was located on the estate of the Domínguez family in the municipality of Tacoronte, in the north of the island of Tenerife. Some photographs of the time show how they went to visit these caves. One of these photographs, dating from 1924, shows Oscar's sisters and friends posing together with other artists, such as the painter Álvaro Fariña, at the entrance of the cave[24] (Fig. 4). Psychoanalytical research would bring back memories of the artist's childhood and adolescence, blurring the boundaries between past and present, as well as memories of the collective memory of the Guanche culture, stored in the collective unconscious.

[24] Most of the photographs of Domínguez and his sisters at the Guayonge estate and other places in Tacoronte have been published in Castro and Izquierdo, 2006.

Fig. 4 Sisters and friends of Óscar Domínguez with other artists, such as the painter Álvaro Fariña, at the entrance of Guayonge cave in Tacoronte (north of Tenerife Island), 1924

Domínguez's painting forms part of the interest that the Canary Islands avant-garde had in the islands' pre-colonial past. The second half of the nineteenth century saw a succession of anthropological investigations in the Canary Islands, including those of Richard Francis Burton, who made several trips to Tenerife and Gran Canaria between 1861 and 1880, taking an interest in the aboriginal burial culture (Burton and Cameron 1883). Of particular interest are the various sites of mummified bodies, especially the countless skulls and mummies Burton saw in the north of the island and in the Sebastián Casilda Museum in Tacoronte, which was dismantled in 1898 (Hernández 2009, 19) (Fig. 5). This research was continued in the 1920s through the work of the American anthropologist Earnest Albert Hooton, who did important fieldwork in the Canary Islands in 1925 that was published in his book *The Ancient Inhabitants of the Canary Islands* (Hooton 1970). For his part, the Austrian anthropologist Dominik Josef Wölfel worked in the Canary Islands, where he confirmed the survival of pre-colonial vestiges in the current population. Wölfel is considered the rediscoverer of Leonardo Torriani's *Description*

and History of the Kingdom of the Canary Islands, which he published in 1940.

Fig. 5. Photograph of the Guanche mummy exhibited at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878. National Archeological Museum, Madrid.

The interest of artists linked to the magazine *Gaceta de arte* in Guanche culture was not limited to López Torres and Óscar Domínguez. In 1928, Eduardo Westerdahl wrote the preface to Elfidio Alonso's novel *The Guanches in the cabaret* (*Los Guanches en el cabaret*), a book that combats both literary and folkloric regionalism. For his part, Pedro García Cabrera, the magazine's secretary, published *Man as a function of the landscape* (*El hombre en función del paisaje*), a text in which he pointed out that the historical avant-gardes rejected the idea of Western artistic tradition by drawing inspiration from the creations of 'primitive' art (García 2004, 132). This return to 'primitive' forms would, according to García Cabrera, make it possible to understand man as a function of landscape, as the title of his book indicates[25].

CONCLUSIONS

The Canarian avant-garde adapted the Freudian metaphor that assimilates the psychoanalytical technique with archaeological stratigraphy to the geological context of the islands. As we have seen, archaeological and geological allusions are used interchangeably to allude to unknown landscapes through a signifying chain that condenses psychic, archaeological, geological, and political allusions.

The presence of Freudian thought in the pages of *Gaceta de arte* has been demonstrated. This presence is not orthodox, nor is it part of the theoretical arguments of the Freudian or Jungian psychoanalytic movement, but is due to the literary, poetic and political interpretation that French and Canarian surrealism made of psychoanalysis as a tool for liberation and interpretation of the unconscious world, sometimes with a clear political basis related to Marxist theory.

Although the concept of "Psychogeology of Surrealism" is proposed by a Canarian avant-garde author such as Domingo López Torres, it has been shown that it is based on Freud's theory of sexuality and the reinterpretation of French surrealist texts by Breton, Éluard and Tzara. The new and unknown landscapes to which

[25] Some authors consider that "the presence of ghosts of the past, such as the Guanches, in the avant-garde production of the painters Jorge Oramas, Felo Monzón and Óscar Domínguez, and the writers Agustín Espinosa and Elfidio Alonso, among others, can be seen as a manifestation of a "hauntological problem" (Gil, 2020:383). This concept is taken from the philosopher Jacques Derrida who defines it as a term that designates "the spectral character of ideologies of the past whose ontological ambiguity persistently haunts the present in the form of the intangible ghosts of the contemporary world".

López Torres refers arise from Breton's communicating vessels, which, like volcanic tubes, connect the conscious and unconscious worlds, from Éluard's volcanic poetry, or from that "serenity of the volcano that cannot be judged" to which Tzara refers.

For his part, Óscar Domínguez employs different techniques halfway between the artistic and the psychological (lithochronism, decalcomania, and psychogeology) with a common objective: to question traditional temporalities and, therefore, to connect with a previous individual (childhood) and collective ('primitive' cultures) stages.

Domínguez's painting must be understood in a complex way. On the one hand, the use of the psychoanalytical metaphor of archaeological and geological stratigraphy allows him to allude to the presence of the 'primitive' Guanche culture in the deepest strata of Canarian culture. On the other hand, this type of work allows us to problematise the readings of the French surrealist canon and to propose new readings of the canon from a perspective that includes not only the contributions of the Canarian avant-garde but also to redefine the reading of the surrealist canon from a global perspective.

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MÁRIO DE ANDRADE'S *PRIMITIVISM*: LANGUAGE, RACE AND TRANSCULTURALISM

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the concept of *primitivism* in Mário de Andrades's poetic, narrative and essayistic works from the 1920s, thus contributing towards clarifying his positioning considering the nationality-cosmopolitan binomial, the racial issues, and the romantic ideals. In defence of the concept of *primitivism* as a force of irruption of the past into the present, rather than the return to earlier aesthetics, I shall discuss its functionalities in what concerns the recreation of language, as well as its articulation with the concepts of unilaterality and exclusivism. Finally, I will demonstrate the decolonising role of the concept and its contribution to the making of Brazilian art and Brazil itself in the form of multi-ethnic concepts open to cosmopolitanism.

INTRODUCTION

In his book *Modernity in Black and White* (2021), Rafael Cardoso introduces an innovative perspective on Brazilian modernity throughout the historical period between 1890 and 1945. In the fourth chapter of this study, Cardoso discusses the contrast between the two prevailing perspectives on the concept of *primitivism* in the Brazilian modernist context of the 1920s: the one from Mário de Andrade, stemming from São Paulo's modernist scene (1922), and the one from the anthropophagic movement, whose expression was essentially manifested in the *Revista de Antropofagia*, which would reach a total of 16 published issues, between May 1928 and August 1929. In the introduction to this book, Mário de Andrade's seemingly primitivist perspective is summarised as follows: "Mário de Andrade's apprehension of the rural and the ethnic as legitimate objects of folkloric study was couched in Romantic notions of lost purity and was thus implicitly primitivist, in the European sense of appropriating the purportedly backward culture of the subaltern *other* for purposes of affirming the transgressive energies of the modernist *self*" (Cardoso 2021, 20-1).

For Rafael Cardoso, Mário de Andrade's notion of what is primitive is rooted in a Romantic view, which characterises it as something pure that can only exist in a lost past or at the far reaches of a territory untouched by civilisation. Such a notion is, therefore, hostile to the cosmopolitanism featured in the urban artistic manifestations of primitivism, which would degenerate such purity and, thus, the national authenticity of a primitivist aesthetic. Cardoso concedes, however, that Andrade was aware of the emergent urban culture's manifestations, such as samba and Carnival, but did not recognise them as legitimate cultural expressions of the Brazilian identity. The reasons for Andrade's disavowal were associated with: 1. His inability to find a relationship between these urban phenomena and rural popular culture, which was the subject of his folkloric and ethnomusicological research; 2. Pedantry, since these urban popular manifestations were associated with racially mixed populations that were open to imported influences, thus containing an attribute of vulgarity and degradation incompatible with his apparent romantic ideals of cultural and ethnic purity.

These considerations from Rafael Cardoso deserve contrasting scrutiny with elements from Mário de Andrade's works, which have inclusively been the object of vast critical attention. I am referring, for instance, to the vigour with which carnivalesque

culture marks some of Mário de Andrade's creative texts from the 1920s, namely *Paulicéia desvairada* (1922), *Clã do jabuti* (1927) and *Macunaíma* (1928).

In the third chapter of the book *Ruínas de linhas puras: quatro ensaios em torno a Macunaíma* (1998), José Luiz Passos advocates that Mário de Andrade's abandonment of the canonical poetic forms in *Paulicéia Desvairada* has caused him to undergo a form of vertigo for which the solution was the creation of a carnivalesque figure of himself: the harlequin. After finding the Brazilian counterpart to this character (who was imported from *Commedia dell'arte*) in Mário de Andrade's ethnographic research, Passos emphasises that "the harlequin is converted into the first locus of mixture and adaptation, of the quest for a new language which may translate the hybridism of the Brazilian cultural scene"(Passos 1998, 58)," [1] in order to emphatically conclude that his "diamond-checkered costume would be Macunaíma's first attire" [2] (Passos 1998, 59).

In 1923, Mário de Andrade wrote the poem "Carnaval Carioca", which would integrate *Clã do jabuti*. Covering a wide idea of "Brazilianness", this book constitutes a geographical expansion of the research that Mário de Andrade, moved by his enthusiasm for the arrival of modernist aesthetics to the heart of São Paulo, had carried out in *Paulicéia Desvairada*. In the article "*O Carnaval Carioca,* de Mário de Andrade", Alberto Pucheu defends that the *popular* Rio Carnival operates a metamorphosis of a São Paulo's *erudite* individual into a poet, who, free from his identity (Pucheu 2009, 170), converts that Dionysian reality of the party into the most thriving Brazilian civilisation, encompassing a significant cultural, geographical, racial and social class diversity, which simultaneously integrates cosmopolitan elements. [3]

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[1] ["o arlequim se converte no primeiro locus da mistura e da adaptação, da busca por uma nova linguagem que traduzisse o hibridismo do cenário cultural brasileiro"] Note: All translations without a reference are from this article's author.

[2] ["traje de losangos seria a primeira roupa de Macunaíma"]

[3] "[...] o carnaval carioca é um ponto de intensificação, um ponto de exceção que, com suas 'alegorias, críticas [e] paródias' no lugar de flagrar apenas a banalidade, a ordinariedade, a mesquinhez e a mixórdia da vida cotidiana [...] permite a cidade do Rio de Janeiro se mostrar como a que, mesmo fora do carnaval, com sua tão gritante multiplicidade e mistura de cores e raças de um povo mestiço sincrético em constante processo de multiculturações, desculturações e transculturações, abriga, na complexidade cosmopolita de seu 'aquário multicor,' 'a mais pujante civilização do Brasil': negros, brancos, mulatos, índios e mestiços de modo geral, como a 'morena boa' que, provocando eroticamente o desejo do poeta, tem nos olhos '[...] o verde das florestas,/ Todo um Brasil de escravos banzo sensualismos,/ Índios nus balanceando na terra das tabas,/

As my third point, I would like to mention the robust tradition of reading *Macunaíma* in the light of Bakhtinian theories.[4] In the introduction to his book from 1965, *Rabelais and His World*, Mikhail Bakhtin advocates the existence of a popular European comical and carnivalesque medieval culture which continued throughout the Renaissance. In its parodic and satirical manifestations, such culture reflected an opposition to the official culture of that epoch (which included the epic), characterised by a serious, religious and feudal tone that was used for the preservation of the structures and figures of power in the very same positions they had always held. The carnivalesque culture was, therefore, a minor culture, not in the sense of being the culture of a minority of the population, but rather in the sense of being the culture of a diminished people, subjected to a grinding power. Macunaíma is precisely the prototype of the fusion of all the denigrated people of Brazil, constituted by ugly, poor, fatherless, black, Indigenous people – in the very first chapter, the protagonist is presented as being an ugly child, a "jigaboo and son of the fear of the night," (Andrade 1996, 5)[5] born from an Indian woman, and who does not know who his father is nor does he care; in other words,

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Cauim curare cachiri/ Cajás... Ariticuns... Pele de Sol!,' misturam-se com cafres, ingleses, argentinos, polacas, ianques, alsacianas, portuguesas, holandesas... Eis a triangulação primeiramente formadora do Brasil, o que é chamado de migrações secundárias e o que assinalaria para um completo fora, todos acatados na heterogeneidade misturada do dentro, no espaço público em que ocorre a festa popular." (Pucheu 2009, 160-1). ["(...) Rio carnival is an intensification point, an exception point which, with its "allegories, critiques [and] parodies", rather than just exposing the banality, the ordinariness, the pettiness and the hodgepodge of everyday life (...) is what allows the city of Rio de Janeiro to reveal itself as the one which, even outside carnival, with its blatant multiplicity and mixture of colors and races belonging to a syncretic mixed people in a constant process of multiculturalisms, deculturations and transculturations, harbors, in the cosmopolitan complexity of its "multi-color aquarium", "the most thriving Brazilian civilization": blacks, whites, mulattoes, Indians and mixed-race in general, such as the "hot brunette" who, erotically provoking the poet's desire, has in her eyes "[...] the green of the forests./ An entire Brazil made of slaves wistfully sensual,/ Naked Indians balancing in the land of tabas (indigenous villages),/ Cauim curare cachiri/ Cajás... Ariticuns... Sun Skin!", are mixed with kaffirs, Englishmen, Argentinians, Polish women, Yankees, Alsatian women, Portuguese women, Dutch women... Herein is the primarily formative triangulation of Brazil, the so-called secondary migrations and what would point towards a complete outside, all complied in mixed heterogeneity of the inside, in the public space where the popular festivity occurs."]

[4] This tradition includes scholars such as Mário Chamie (1970), Suzana Camargo (1977); Gilda de Mello e Souza (1979); Robson Pereira Gonçalves (1982); and José Luiz Passos (1998).

[5] ["preto retinto e filho do medo da noite"]

his orphanhood is a naturalised condition.[6] In the recent study, "Decolonizing Brazil: Minor Heroism in Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma*", João Albuquerque (2022, 83-103) demonstrates how Mário de Andrade carnivalises São Paulo's urban culture by using the indigenous cultures' myths and legends. According to Alfredo Cesar Melo, Mário de Andrade's *primitivsm* marks its presence in this novel with a critical tone towards the European conceptions of the very same concept by using primitive psychology as a privileged driving force for artistic creation:

> The French anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (quite well read by Mário) had established in his book *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (1910), a description of primitives' mentality: they could not distinguish the real from the supernatural and would resort to "mystical participation" in order to shape the world. Rather than interpret such judgment as a claim of inferiority aimed at tropical peoples, Mário de Andrade used magical thinking as an inspiration to establish his narrative. Without the magical realism found in *Macunaíma*, the novelist would not have been able to carry out his plan to "degeograph" Brazilian culture, with such a degree of success. Such an enterprise was heightened by the ability of the hero to magically move and travel to the several corners of the country (Melo 2010, 208-9).[7]

Associated with primitive magical thinking is a specific technique that opens up possibilities for artistic creation not only on a purely stylistic level, but also having a destabilising effect on how technologically advanced civilizations conceive the world. It is a technique able both to "degeograph", as well as to provide the most direct and faster means of communication between the most remote places.

The rejection of the alleged inferiority of primitive peoples by Mário de Andrade is explicitly confirmed in the essay

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[6] It is curious to observe that Macunaíma's family shares the characteristic of single parenthood with the mulatto family of Mário de Andrade, ["não incomum entre as classes mais pobres daquele tempo"] (Tércio, 2019: 16) ["not uncommon amongst the poorest classes in those times].

[7] ["O antropólogo francês Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (bastante lido por Mário) havia estabelecido em seu livro *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (1910) uma descrição da mentalidade dos primitivos: estes não conseguiriam distinguir o real do supernatural e recorreriam à "participação mística" para manipular o mundo. Ao invés de Mário de Andrade tomar tal juízo como uma acusação de inferioridade aos povos tropicais, o pensamento mágico serviu de inspiração para entabular a sua narrativa. Sem o realismo mágico de *Macunaíma*, o romancista não poderia ter levado a cabo seu projeto de "desgeograficar" a cultura brasileira, com tanto sucesso. Essa empreitada foi potencializada pela capacidade de o herói deslocar-se e viajar magicamente para os mais diferentes rincões do país."]

"Primitivos", published in 1943 in *Revista da Academia Paulista de Letras.* Here, he reflects on the prevalent notions of *primitive* in the scope of modern aesthetics and, demonstrating the utility and the critical potential of the concept against the pejorative connotations that were attributed to it, outright rejects the notion of "relative-historical primitive", in other words, he refuses the idea that a *primitive artist* may be inferior in comparison with a posterior historical period:

> (...) the absence of such technical process or of such matter cannot ever imply a relation to *primitivism*. (...) What would oil be needed on the "Núpcias Aldobrandinas" and what use would reinforced concrete have for the Parthenon? ...Where critique may focus, on this case, is on the ones who build their pitiful parthenons with reinforced concrete. Certain absences solely represent difference and character. And if character is not related to the historical context, but is a part of the essence itself of the work of art, difference does not imply, only by itself, any relative notion of inferiority nor even subalternity (in Riaviz 2003, xii).[8]

The application of techniques and psychological characteristics that Mário de Andrade calls primary or primitive by contemporaneous artists do not correspond, therefore, to any attempt to experience an outdated and inferior human mental stage, but rather to undertake a differentiated and differentiator *mental attitude*, one where those past elements fulfil a critical function and contribute to the emergence of what is timeless. Indeed, as Larissa Costa da Mata defends, in the first case, what is primitive would have the statute of heritage and origin; and, in the second case, (pre)history and post-history "are implied in the same phenomenon, in a way that primitive would not be the form, but rather a latent force able to modify the present"[9] (Costa da Mata 2018, 159).

In these cases from Mário de Andrade's artistic and essayistic works, there is the beginning of a counter-argument in relation to his purported exotic view of the *other*. The second part

[8] ["[...]a ausência de tal processo técnico ou de tal matéria não poderá implicar jamais uma relação de primitivismo. [...] De que serviriam óleo pras 'Núpcias Aldobrandinas' e o cimento armado pro Partenão? ... Onde a crítica terá de exercer-se, neste caso, é nos que fazem com cimento armado os seus pífios partenões. Certas ausências representam apenas diferença e carácter. E se caráter não é uma relação histórica, mas participa da essência mesma da obra-de-arte, diferença não implica, só por si, nenhuma noção relativa de inferioridade ou sequer de subalternidade."]

[9] ["encontram-se implicadas no mesmo fenômeno, de modo que o primitivo não seria a forma, mas uma força latente capaz de modificar o presente."]

of this article intends to expand on the discussion around the concept of *primitivism* in this author's works by describing its main characteristics in detail, as well as its functionality in Mário de Andrade's national-aesthetic programme.

LANGUAGE, RACE AND TRANSCULTURALISM

As far as it is known, the first time Mário de Andrade describes himself as being a primitivist is in the preamble to his first work marked by a modernist aesthetic, *Paulicéia Desvairada*: "We are in reality the primitives of the new age. Aesthetically: From the hypotheses made by psychologists, naturalists and critics on the primitives from past periods, I found a more human and free expression of art" (Andrade 2021, 46).[10] In this text, Mário de Andrade also claims to be an impressionist and openly assumes the influence of Italian futurism, refusing nevertheless a fully-fledged affiliation to the avant-garde movement. One of Mário de Andrade's connection points with Italian futurism is the adoption of practices that put into motion a permanent anti-systematic creative attitude: "Marinetti was wonderful when he rediscovered the musical, universal, symbolic, associative, suggestive power of the liberated word. In fact, it is as old as Adam. Marinetti made a mistake, though: he made a system out of it" (Andrade 2021, 43).[11] According to Mário de Andrade's idea explained above, it could be said that Marinetti was a primitivist to the extent that he *re*discovered the powers of the freed word, in other words, by making it so that a power obtained in the past could break through into the present.

Herein is the first trait of primitivism in Mário de Andrade: to write in Brazilian—a trait, this one in particular, related to romanticism. In 1942, Mário de Andrade held the conference *O Movimento Modernista.* At a certain point, he enunciated the central task that the bourgeois of the Brazilian modernist movement left unfinished: the creation of a Brazilian language which, freeing itself from its colonial shackles, could better accommodate the collective conscience of the country, thus producing a literature with *a* Brazilian identity:

[10] ["Somos na realidade os primitivos duma era nova. Esteticamente: fui buscar entre as hipóteses feitas por psicólogos, naturalistas e críticos sobre os primitivos das eras passadas, expressão mais humana e livre de arte."]

[11] ["Marinetti foi grande quando redescobriu o poder sugestivo, associativo, simbólico, universal, musical da palavra em liberdade. Aliás: velha como Adão. Marinetti errou: fez dela sistema."]

> There is no doubt that today we feel and we think as Brazilians *quantum satis* [as much as is required]. I say this even with a certain melancholy, friend Macunaíma, my brother. But this is not enough to mark out our verbal expression, despite the Brazilian reality being, even psychologically, much stronger and more indissoluble than in the days of José de Alencar or Machado de Assis. And how can we deny that they too thought as Brazilians? How can we deny that into the style of Machado de Assis, modelled on the Lusitanian, there enters a familiar quid [something] that differentiates him vertically from Garrett or Ortigão, say? But if in the Romantics, in Alvares de Azevedo, Varela, Alencar, Macedo, Castro Alves, there is a Brazilian identity that is greater than that of Brás Cubas or Bilac, it is because the Romantics achieved a 'forgetting' of Portuguese grammar that allowed a much greater synergy between psychological make-up and its verbal expression. (Andrade 2008, 106)[12]

Supported by considerations about the literature produced by some of the most important Brazilian writers from the generations that immediately preceded his own, Mário de Andrade's diagnosis of Brazil focuses on a historical process of decolonisation being put into action. The rise of Romantic nationalism at a global scale met favourable conditions for further development in the Brazilian writers from the subsequent decades until Brazil's independence in 1822, who, according to Abel Barros Baptista, raised for themselves "a new problem and a new mission, namely to attempt to delimit the Brazilian character of the literature thereafter made in Brazil and, therefore, contribute to the edification of Brazil as an independent nation" (Baptista 2003, 22).[13] The mentioned problem and mission were not abandoned by the following literary generation, in which Machado de Assis thrived in what contributions are concerned.

Even if Mário de Andrade's diagnosis about the generations that were predecessors to his own is arguable, it is not in the

[12] ["Não há dúvida nenhuma que nós hoje sentimos e pensamos o *quantum satis* brasileiramente. Digo isto até com certa malinconia, amigo Macunaíma, meu irmão. Mas isso não é o bastante para identificar a nossa expressão verbal, muito embora a realidade brasileira, mesmo psicológica, seja agora mais forte e insoluvel que nos tempos de José de Alencar ou de Machado de Assis. E como negar que estes tambem pensavam brasileiramente? Como negar que no estilo de Machado de Assis, luso pelo ideal, intervem um *quid* familiar que o diferença verticalmente de um Garret e um Ortigão? Mas si nos românticos, em Alvares de Azevedo, Varela, Alencar, Macedo, Castro Alves, há uma identidade brasileira que nos parece bem maior que a de Brás Cubas ou Bilac, é porque nos românticos chegou-se a um 'esquecimento' da gramática portuguesa, que permitiu muito maior colaboração entre o ser psicológico e sua expressão verbal."]

[13] ["um novo problema e uma nova missão, os quais seriam os de procurarem delimitar o caráter brasileiro da literatura a fazer no Brasil e de, assim, contribuírem para a edificação do Brasil como nação independente."]

scope of this research to engage in an exhaustive discussion of its pertinence. It is enough to affix to it the caveat that such statements are merely general and impressive, liable for reperspectivation, as it occurs in the letter sent to Anita Malfatti (1927), in which Andrade admits that the writing of *Macunaíma* had been inspired on the works from Machado de Assis, whose Brazilianess is reflected even in the use of the language.[14]

Such impressiveness is also confirmed by the paradoxical self-irony with which Andrade makes a "melancholic" evocation of Macunaíma, insofar that in 1942, he already argues that the Brazilian reality has a notable cohesion. He does not do so, however, without being conscious that his opinion was the opposite at the time when he wrote the history of his *yet* "brother". This opens the discussion on racial and nationality matters associated with Mário de Andrade's primitivism, where his theses no longer coincide with Romanticism. In the preface written by Andrade immediately after finishing the first draft of *Macunaíma*, in 1926, he states that the idea to write Macunaíma was born from the similarities that he found between the lack of character he saw in the Brazilian Man and the Amerindian heroic figure Makunaima, drawn from the studies of Theodor Koch-Grünberg (Andrade 2017, 190-192). However, most of the elements from the Taulipáng e Arekuná indigenous groups, who were the German ethnographer's research subjects, inhabited the Venezuelan savannah and, with less incidence, the Brazilian north and the British Guyana. In the unedited preface from 1928, Mário de Andrade states that *Macunaíma*, "the hero himself which I have retrieved from Koch-Grünberg's German, cannot even be said to be from Brazil. He is as much or even more Venezuelan than he is of our people and does not know the stupidity of the limits to stop in the 'land of the English' as Koch-Grünberg calls the British Guyana. The circumstance that the hero of the book is not

[14] ["[...] se o sr. Mário de Andrade se *inspira* em Machado de Assis é porque quis *tradicionalizar* a orientação humorística brasileira representada por Machado na literatura de ordem artística, Machado que a gente pondo reparo mais íntimo é mais brasileiro do que parece à primeira vista. Até na língua? Até na língua que estudada de mais perto mostra uma aversão quase sistemática pelos modismos especializadamente portugas."] (Andrade 1996, 491). ["(...) if Mr. Mário de Andrade takes his inspiration from Machado de Assis it is because he wanted to create a tradition out of the Brazilian tendency in comedy, a trait which is represented by Machado in artistic literature. Machado whom, if we take a more intimate look at him, is more Brazilian than it seems at first sight. Even in the language? Even in the language, which demonstrates an almost systemic aversion to the specialized Portuguese fashions when it is closely studied."]

absolutely Brazilian has something which pleases me" (Andrade 2017, 195).[15]

This quote describes several aspects which cast the basis for a discussion on the topics of nationality and cosmopolitanism in *Macunaíma*. I shall start with the racial matter. By stating that the book's hero is not even a fully-fledged Brazilian, Mário de Andrade distances himself from the idealised national role attributed to the indigenous peoples by the Romantic programme (in Andrade 2017, 198),[16] synthesised by Antônio Cândido in *Formação da literatura brasileira*, in the following way: "the Amerindians are the most legitimate Brazilians, and their poetical characteristics should be researched and used as a theme" (Cândido 2000 (2), 294).[17] In light of the text *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira*, published in 1928, where Mário de Andrade is once again defender of *primitivist* aesthetics (Andrade 1972, 18-9), such idealisation may lead to the distortion of the compelling national reality of Brazil, tainting it with two stunting concepts: *unilaterality* and *exclusivism*.

Unilaterality consists of defending that the national art stems from the traditions of a single ethnic trace among the three that constitute the mixed plurality of the Brazilian people(s), whether such ethnic trace is Amerindian, African or Portuguese (Andrade 1972, 28-9). When the defence of this argument has a colonial or foreign origin, it tends to produce an exoticised view of national culture (Andrade 1972, 15-6). With this said, Mário de Andrade's criteria to resort to ethnic elements, whichever they are (Indigenous, African or white), is the coincidence and the potential for coalescence of these elements with the heteroclite and multiple national cultures of a Brazil whose ethnic and group plurality is in permanent metamorphosis. In sum, the myths, structures and values retrieved by Mário de Andrade from Theodor Koch-Grünberg's work around the heroic Amerindian figure Makunaima, who shared with the Brazilian an essential lack of character, underwent a miscegenation

[15] ["O próprio herói do livro que tirei do alemão de Koch-Grünberg, nem se pode falar que é do Brasil. É tão ou mais venezuelano como da gente e desconhece a estupidez dos limites pra parar na 'terra dos ingleses' como ele chama a Guiana Inglesa. Essa circunstância do herói do livro não ser absolutamente brasileiro me agrada como o quê."]

[16] A demarcation that did not have a repercussion on many readers, who still read the work with the lenses of romantic principles. In the introduction of *Macunaíma*'s e-book version, "A irrupção das formas selvagens", Eduardo Sterzi emphasizes the reductionist consequences of these misreadings

[17] ["os índios são os brasileiros mais lídimos, devendo-se investigar as suas características poéticas e tomá-los como tema"]

process with the characteristics that had already been naturalised as Brazilian (mixed therefore) as a result of the cultural confluence of the several groups and ethnicities which formed the Brazilian people.[18]

Exclusivism is the other concept related to the idea of nationality that Mário de Andrade repudiates. It consists of an artistic creation formed with exclusively national ethnic elements, which refuses foreign influences. However, this does not imply that accepting these influences should be done without criteria. In order to avoid the openness to cosmopolitanism unleashes processes of cultural colonialism, Mário de Andrade adverts the artist, on the one hand, for the need to proceed to a selection of the documentation that he is going to use as a basis and admits, on the other hand, that there always has to be some degree of reaction against what is foreign. A reaction which, nevertheless, "should be smartly done through its [of what is foreign] deformation and adaptation. Not through repulse"(Andrade 1972, 26).[19]

When, however, the useless preconception of exclusivism is in force, the produced works of art *excessively* amount to characteristics of the nation, falling into an exoticism which becomes exotic even to the Brazilian individual himself. Let us compare this exclusivist danger with the considerations drawn by Mário de Andrade in the letter addressed to Manuel Bandeira on December 12, 1930, due to a proposal that he had received for translating *Macunaíma* into English:

> I do not believe that she [the translator] can reproduce the book's poem-hero-comical essence. (...) But it always seems to me that a certain excessively externally Brazilian side of the book is lost in

[18] An argument shared by Daniel Silva, who dissociates the perspectives of Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade from other modernists which were their contemporaries: "namely those who offered multiculturalist narratives of Brazil while marginalizing Afro-Brazilians. Some of the artists, writers, and poets who participated in Antropofagia produced their own modernist epics and blueprints for a 'Brazilian-Brazil.' Many of these works (...) construct national identity through a mythical Tupi figure. This idealization of the Tupi, however, seeks a national origin through a precolonial fantasy. This is where Mário and Oswald de Andrade offer a more nuanced decolonial project. Rather than conceiving a central signifier that purports to convey a precolonial origin, Mário's and Oswald's respective work suggests that such an origin is untenable, and that any articulation of one is inevitably constructed through imperial knowledge and writing about the Tupi. The decolonial path, therefore, begins with a reading or decolonial consumption of the field of meaning produced by Empire. In the case of *Macunaíma*, the journey begins with an experience of the imperial categories of race, not prior to such categories." (Silva 2018, 71).

[19] ["deve ser feita espertalhonamente pela deformação e adaptação dele [do que é estrangeiro]. Não pela repulsa."]

> favour of the book itself. (...) Perhaps *Macunaíma* has something to gain in English because secretly what it seems to me is that the satire, besides being able to be directed at the Brazilian in general, of whom it shows some characteristic aspects, while systematically hiding the good aspects, also always seemed to me to be more of a universal satire to the contemporaneous man, mainly under the point of view of this itinerant lack of will, of these moral notions created at the moment they are to be realised, which I feel and often see in the man of today (Andrade 1996, 509-510).[20]

Despite *Macunaíma*'s objectivity, provided by the excessively external representation of the nation's elements, Mário de Andrade advocates that this characteristic is moved to a secondary role, it *is lost*, in favour of its cosmopolitan dimension, which is manifested precisely through the universality of the contemporaneous man's *psychic* characteristics embedded there. According to Andrade, this excessively national characteristic is defective solely when turned into a unique standard of creation or critique (Andrade 1972, 27), in other words, when it becomes exclusivist. Thus, when such characteristic sprawls and undoes its limits, it paradoxically becomes stronger in the uncapturable nature of its substance: "What provides the richness of the main European schools is precisely an unquestionable national character but, in most cases, undefinable nonetheless" (Andrade 1972, 27).[21]

Thereby, the destabilising force of those cosmopolitan features proves that the centripetal research movement towards the deep Brazil, which is reflected in the writing of *Macunaíma*, does not converge into any spiritual centre that may be confined to the Brazilian geopolitical frontiers, but rather to a singular idea of a rhizome-country whose *psychic* cartography mixes extensions and intensities, routes and becomings, leading its frontiers to become misty, indiscernible, and porous.

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[20] ["Não creio que ela [a tradutora] consiga reproduzir a essência poema-herói-cômico, do livro. (...) Mas sempre me parece que certo lado excessivamente exteriormente brasileiro do livro se perde em favor do próprio livro. (...) Isso talvez o *Macunaíma* ganhe em inglês porque muito secretamente o que me parece é que a sátira além de dirigível ao brasileiro em geral, de que mostra alguns aspectos característicos, escondendo os aspectos bons sistematicamente, o certo é que sempre me pareceu também uma sátira mais universal ao homem contemporâneo, principalmente sob o ponto-de-vista desta sem-vontade itinerante, destas noções morais criadas no momento de as realizar, que sinto e vejo tanto no homem de agora."]

[21] ["O que faz a riqueza das principais escolas europeas é justamente um caracter nacional incontestável mas na maioria dos casos indefinível porém."]

CONCLUSION

The explanation concerning the characteristics of Mário de Andrade's *primitivism* allows us to conclude that this concept holds a dynamic that fosters cultural hybridism through the articulation of actuality and past, rural and urban realities, cosmopolitan and national artistic manifestations, and ethnic diversity. It has also been demonstrated that such articulations are not devoid of critical thinking and act towards cultural decolonisation. Such action is carried out by distorting and deconstructing the colonial cultural traits, which result in a lack of correspondence, adherence, and assimilation in the manifestations of Brazilian people's popular culture. The most striking example is found in Mário de Andrade's commitment to the transformation of the written language, which in his day was still under the control of an academia bound to the linguistic formalities of European Portuguese and French. *Primitivism* bursts forth in this context not as a form of writing an indigenous language but rather as a renewal of the Romantic tradition, in which European Portuguese becomes characteristically Brazilian in vocabulary and grammatical terms due to the influence of several oral cultures derived from the peoples who inhabited Brazil.

Such attention to the preservation of the cultural multiplicity and heterogeneity of the Brazilian peoples calls into question the hegemony of the social organisation of colonial origin, thus questioning its conditions of possibility. Mário de Andrade's *primitivism* subverts the structure of thoughts centred upon logic, rationality and stratification. It does so by "contaminating" such structure with becoming, magical thinking, intuitive pragmatism, and a scale of values that awards privilege to unproductivity and makes the apology of idleness, festivity, childishness, and eroticism. Additionally, this is done through a form of interpersonal relationship that has the tendency to incorporate difference rather than segregating it.

It is only through the critical filter and the hybridity and transformation potential of *primitivism* that the cosmopolitan characteristics integrated into popular culture can be embedded into erudite culture, and according to Mário de Andrade, such characteristics fully deserve to be a part of national culture.

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LATIN AMERICA: THE ISSUE OF EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDES AND THE AMERINDIAN CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

This essay questions how European modernisms and avant-gardes were received by Latin American art, producing cultural displacements, migrations, and transfers across the Atlantic and incorporating pre-Hispanic art and the aesthetic expressions of European avant-gardes. Such movements introduced new aspects within Latin American modernisms, distinct from the European avant-gardes of the early twentieth century—in contact with the art of African and Oceanian countries—, a period in which some artists appropriated non-Western art aesthetics through painting, sculpture, textile, configuring modernism, and a primitivist imaginary. This notion is further researched by analysing the mural *Historical Representation of Culture*, created by the Mexican artist and architect Juan O'Gorman at the façade of the Central Library of the National Autonomous University of Mexico—an artistic project that incorporates indigenous art within a cultural project for a more modern Mexico City, seeking to erase the imaginary of its Hispanic colonial past.

INTRODUCTION

Several artists produced cultural displacements, migrations, and transfers between Latin American countries and Europe, especially Paris, introducing new aspects within Latin American modernisms by incorporating aesthetics of the European avant-garde and Amerindian culture. The relations between pre-Hispanic art and Latin American modern art were distinct from those seen in the European avant-garde in contact with African and Oceanian countries. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, European modern art incorporated forms of representation used in non-Western art objects in their works while conceiving the art of these countries as ensued from *primitive* cultures.[1]

Such reflection on modern art and *primitivism* in Latin American countries is timely in light of Indigenous art and thought. Aesthetic aspects of Indigenous art have been discussed and revisited in the context of Brazilian modernism, of the critical foundation of the Modern Art Week of 1922, and of the Anthropophagic movement gathered around the *Revista de Antropofagia*, as proposed by Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954), Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973), Raul Bopp (1898-1984) and Patrícia Galvão (1910-1962), between 1928 and 1929.[2] Argentina has also taken several steps towards revisiting the topic of modernism and *Americanist* art, such as the exhibition *La Hora Americana – 1910-1950* [The time for the Americas – 1910-1950] at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires. *La Hora Americana – 1910-1950* presented a grand retrospective of *Americanist* art whose curatorial project sought to review Argentine art by examining concepts and artistic innovations—*indianism, nativism*, and *indigenism*—and the contact of Argentine modern artists with Americanism (Museu Nacional de Buenos Aires, 2014).

Following this line of historiographical inquiry, this essay addresses the relationship between Latin American modernism and *primitive* art, focusing on pre-Hispanic art and Mexican Muralism. Mexico is a country with deep Indigenous cultural and social roots. As Amaral states, "In Mexico, Central America and the Andean region, references to the Indigenous element

[1] Several authors have addressed the topic of modern art and primitivism in the European avant-garde, such as Goldwater (1986), Clifford (1995), Foster (1989), Perry (1998) and Dagen (2019).

[2] Brazil, Mexico and Argentina are the countries featured in my research: Modernismos na América Latina entre os dois lados do Atlântico. IA/Unicamp /Fapesp.

are commonplace due to their populations" (2006, 134). The so-called "modernisms across the Atlantic" are questioned here as to their forms of appropriation of pre-Hispanic art, specifically by Latin American modernism. Therefore, this article analyses the scope and limitations of the categories "Amerindian art" and "primitive art" within Mexican modernism, focusing on an artwork that belongs to Mexican Muralism since this country "centralised a powerful influence over Latin American artistic circles through Muralism, supported by the political concern in force throughout the continent (...)" (Ibid., 133). The proposed question is analysed based on the mural *Historical Representation of Culture*, created by artist and architect Juan O'Gorman (Mexico, 1905-1982), which covers the Central Library of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)—a project that consists of both the inscription of an imaginary of modernity and the use of Amerindian elements. Simultaneously, it combines avant-garde in visual arts and traditional Amerindian cultures in Latin America, mediated by cultural transfers. As opposed to Western European art of the time, in this case, the duality between the hegemonic European art system and the representation of the *Other* within the *primitivist* imaginary of African cultures is absent. In light of the proposed framework, this essay reflects on the topic of cultural appropriation of Amerindian artistic objects in the 20th century and the decontextualisation of these same pieces in O'Gorman's works.

AVANT-GARDE AND ARTISTIC PRIMITIVISM IN EUROPE

According to art historian Maíra Bovisio, the first private collections of ethnographic art acquired by artists or collectors in Paris appeared between 1905 and 1918: from Matisse, Vlaminck, Derain—the first to buy works from Africa and Oceania in antique shops and/or in the Paris market—; followed shortly later by Picasso, Braque and the Marchand Ambroise Vollard. She also considers that "the responsibility for the anthropological birth of the category *Primitive* Art fundamentally accounts to German ethnologist Franz Boas (1859-1942) with the publication of his text *Primitive Art* in 1927," in which he analysed the fundamental features of *primitive* art, including Indigenous art objects (Bovisio 1999, 340). As a concept, *primitivism* has been inscribed and reiterated in art historiography from the publication of Robert Goldwater's 1938 book *Primitivism in Modern Art. Still, the* author considers that the twentieth-century artistic

interest in the artistic production (objects) of *primitive peoples* dates back to the early nineteenth century (Goldwater 1986, 22). By delimiting the notion of *artistic primitivism*, proposed by author Philippe Dagen (2019), African, Oceanian, or pre-Hispanic artistic pieces are the core of this analysis, as will be discussed below, excluding from the analysis artworks produced by the *mad*, children and peasants, as Foster explains when pointing out the scope of this term (Foster 1996, 237-268).

European avant-garde works that appropriate and incorporate elements from African peoples and define the art produced on the African continent as *primitivist* refer mainly to Cubist art. Paul Gauguin emerged as the first modern artist, later followed by Pablo Picasso and other Cubist artists, for whom the myth of the *savage* became the touchstone for a philosophy on art and life. *Primitivism*, for them, was not only the subject but the complex pictorial language. In this context, it is essential to note the relations between European avant-garde and artistic and ethnographic objects from Africa and Oceania, which, alongside paintings, include sculpture and textile art.

Gill Perry sees *primitivism* as a complex network of sociological, ideological, aesthetic, scientific, anthropological, political and legal interests and discourses that feed into and determine a culture. For her, "as a discourse involves a relationship of power, (...) those within Western society who analyse, paint, or reproduce a view of the *primitive* would, by this activity, be dominating, restructuring and having authority over those they define as primitive. Around the turn of the century, that which was described as *primitive* included the products of a recently colonised country" (Perry 1998, 4-5). Paradoxically, Perry considers that "avant-garde artists such as Gauguin and Picasso were somehow in touch with a pure, direct mode of artistic expression." She also affirms modern tradition as "a kind of continuum of formal affinities with a wide range of supposedly primitive or non-Western sources" (Ibid). As such, the *primitive* would be constitutive of modern art (Ibid., 6).

The extensive literature produced on the subject of *artistic primitivism* and the European avant-garde point to two vectors: the notion of *primitive* art as expressing *purity* and that of Otherness in a world colonised by Europeans, in which the other is uncivilised. The exhibition *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, held at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1984, curated by William Rubin and Kirk Varnedoe, essentially reiterated the interest of the European avant-garde, especially cubists, for African art objects. Discourse

about the aesthetic affinities of this exhibition overlaps with the aesthetic influence that *primitive* art had on avant-garde artists by obscuring the historical references of the objects on display – some of their artefacts and masks – next to the works of artists such as Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin, Giacometti, Paul Klee, Fernand Léger, Brancusi. MoMA's exhibition conceives modernism as the avant-garde's quest to break with the paradigms of classical painting and sculpture by seeking in the *primitive* supposed pre-classical roots, thus renewing painting and sculpture. In this regard, Hal Foster cites Pablo Picasso, whose visit to the Ethnographic Museum of the Trocadéro in Paris in 1907 would have inspired the painting *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* that same year, the MoMA's exhibition's centrepiece. Foster argues that *primitive* in *Demoiselles* is used in favour of the Western culture it intended to question. Perry perfectly sums it up by writing: "The label *primitivism*, on the other hand, has generally been used to describe a Western interest in, and/or reconstruction of, societies designated *primitive*, and their artefacts. Primitivism, then, is generally used to refer to discourses on the *primitive*" (Perry 1993, 5).

Perry also discusses the 'Other,' that is, the notion of alterity (Otherness), founded on the designation of *primitive* ('the Other' meaning 'the uncivilised'). When analysing Latin American art, the critical work of César Paternosto (2020) is an important reference to resume this notion.

MODERNISMS, INDIGENISM AND OTHERNESS IN LATIN AMERICAN ART

Analysing Latin America requires considering a conceptual dimension that entails not only re-reading the main historiographical narratives of art but also a discussion of the key concepts with which one works – modernisms, *indigenism* and Otherness.

In Latin America, and more precisely Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Mexico, modernism was established by cultural migrations and transfers from the hegemonic centres of art (such as Paris), deriving their specificities from vernacular, Amerindian, and Afro-Atlantic traditions. Latin American modernism had two clearly delimited phases. Its first phase, developed between the 1920s and 1930s, saw the displacements of Latin American artists within Latin America and to Europe. The second phase lasted from the mid-1930s to the 1950s. It was characterised by the return of these artists from Europe to Latin America or by European artists coming to Latin America during the Second World War to establish either a renovating project of European

art in Latin America or in research of Amerindian references, also with the purpose of art renovation.

The political resistance and uprisings that took place in the 1920s around the world shaped critical thought among Latin American intellectuals, such as the Mexican revolutionary movements, which informed the artistic processes of Latin American modernism. One such process was José Carlos Mariátegui's (1894-1930) *indigenism*, which advocated the incorporation of European and pre-Hispanic Amerindian cultures into Latin American modernism, hence influencing artists and intellectuals from Latin American countries, especially Mexico and Argentina. In the mid-twentieth century, Peruvian intellectual José Carlos Mariátegui introduced the term *indigenism* and defined it as a trend of the Latin American avant-garde that manifests itself as a literary genre, a political ideology, and an artistic movement. Undoubtedly, *indigenism* emerges in paradoxical dialectics between a national sphere and the rest of the world (Greet 2009, 3).[3] Such discussions filled the pages of his magazine *Amauta*, published between 1926 and 1930, and showed how artists and intellectuals could not ignore the indigenous uprisings taking place during that time (Mariátegui 1926, 3).

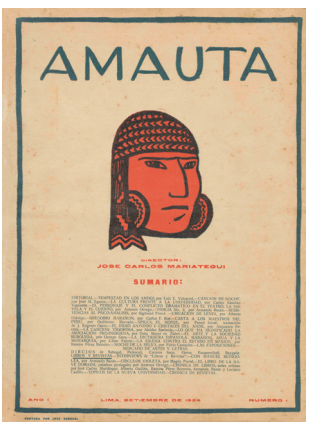

Fig. 1 Journal Amauta. José Carlos Mariátegui Archive https:// www.mariategui.org

[3] José Carlos Mariátegui's intellectual production can be divided into two phases: the first occurs from 1911, when he published his first writings, until 1919, the year in which he goes to Europe. The second goes from 1923, when he returned to Peru, until his death. In this period, one can observe an intense production in several fields: political, social, and cultural. The desire, intention, and praxis of artistic change, although not yet popular, appear in Mariátegui as necessary to accommodate and anticipate the new forms and the political and cultural demands.

Uruguayan painter and writer Joaquín Torres García's (1874-1949) artistic oeuvre also provides elements for discussing modern art and *primitivism* in Latin America. On his return to Uruguay from Europe, the artist sought to establish a unifying plastic language for the continent and start a new era since he considered Latin American colonial art to be over, as art historian Cecilia Torres states (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2014). In his forays into the European avant-garde, Torres García visited the exhibition *Les Arts Anciens de l'Amérique* held at the Louvre Museum in 1928, which included pre-Hispanic pieces from America. Torres García's propositions, strongly marked by the aesthetics and theory of abstract avant-garde art – to which he incorporated pre-Columbian artistic principles – had a fundamental role in some Latin American countries for the reception of geometric abstraction and the links established based on vernacular and Amerindian cultures, especially the Chavín (Peru), the Tiwanaku (Bolivia) and the Inca (from Colombia to Argentina).

For this artist, art was universal and timeless. Instead of copying pre-Columbian art, Torres García proposed a self-identification with the spirit of its creators. Art historian Bovísio (2008), when analysing the pre-Hispanic art referenced in Torres García's works, poses important questions regarding his plastic appropriation of the pre-Hispanic elements. Torres García insists: "that tradition should not be plagiarised, for we understand that such tradition makes up part of the great universal tradition of the centuries: the tradition of the Abstract Man; (...) and since we are from these lands, it may be as genuine as any Inca or Aztec work" (Torres García 1984: 818, apud Bovísio 2008, 8).

Another perspective for approaching Amerindian art in Latin America is that of Otherness and permanence, and even the origin of geometric abstraction in pre-Columbian art in relation to the European art system. The exhibition *Abstraccíon: El paradigma ameríndio* [Abstraction: The Amerindian paradigm], curated by Cesar Paternosto and held in Brussels (Center for Fine Arts) and Valencia (Valencian Institute of Modern Art) in 2001, sought to reflect on the emergence of abstract art rooted in pre-Columbian art, challenging the dominant belief of abstraction as a Western prerogative. The notions of centre and periphery, and the relation between both, are interpreted from a new reading of abstract forms stemming from artistic mediums such as fabric or ceramics, or basic construction techniques considered in the West as craftsmanship. *Abstraccíon: El paradigma ameríndio* presented the art produced by Amerindian peoples and ignored

by the hegemonic European art history, demonstrating the long existence of abstract art in Amerindian culture but that art historiography has yet to acknowledge. The exhibition included pre-Columbian objects along with pieces by post-war artists such as Gonzalo Fonseca and Anni Albers, who incorporated elements from Amerindian cultures.

JUAN O'GORMAN: MODERNISM AND PRE-HISPANIC ART

Juan O'Gorman was the youngest member of the Mexican muralists, whose most recognised members were Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros. O'Gorman's residence, which he designed in 1929, is considered the first modernist residence in Mexico City, followed by that of Edmund O'Gorman, also built in 1929, and the studio residences of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, designed in 1931 and 1932, located in the district of Coyoacán.

Besides modernist projects concerning civil architecture, implementing a university campus in Mexico City symbolised the will to overcome scientific and cultural delays inscribed in colonial architecture. The project for the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) was coordinated by the architect Mario Pani (1911-1993), who studied at the Paris School of Fine Arts and developed his urban and artistic projects as representations and imaginaries of utopian narratives of modernity. Elements of Mexican culture, especially pre-Hispanic, were incorporated into the architectural and urban part of formal modernist rationality with murals painted by Rivera, Siqueiros, and O'Gorman.

O'Gorman's mural at UNAM's Central Library, created in 1952, was entitled *Historical Representation of Culture*. Its north wall represents pre-Hispanic culture; the south wall depicts the Spanish Conquest and the Independence of Mexico; the east wall portrays the Contemporaneous World and the Mexican Revolution; and the west wall presents The University as a symbol of modernity. O'Gorman's mural, in its north and south walls, also includes depictions of Tláloc, the deity of Teotihuacan, and a nearby urban centre that ended up annexed by the Aztecs. O'Gorman's mural at UNAM's Central Library configures the inscription of modernity's codes and, simultaneously, the insertion of elements from pre-Hispanic cultures. During the 1950s, the district of Coyoacán, where UNAM's main campus was built, was mainly rural and sparsely populated.

The universalistic modernist utopia and the nationalist perspective that informed the artistic projects of UNAM Central Library sought to establish modernism in Mexico City through an imaginary of functional rationality and verticality typical to modernist visions, reflecting on the shape and colour of the surroundings. Such a project imbued the central library building with a universalist rationalist approach to modernity, considering that O'Gorman was influenced by Corbusian modernism and the universal matrix architecture in dialogue with murals images of pre-Hispanic Mexico, painted on the building's windowless walls.

Latin America saw important cultural exchanges between European avant-garde ideas and Amerindian art through Latin American artists who moved to European countries (France and Spain) in the early twentieth century or European artists who travelled to Latin America, namely German Bauhaus artist José Albers, who explored the geometry of blankets produced by pre-Hispanic cultures, such as the Navajo. Therefore, O'Gorman's *Historical Representation of Culture* answers the central question about the specificities of artistic projects developed by the Latin American avant-garde, which incorporated elements from pre-Hispanic art. As discussed, in Latin America, the topic of the avant-garde and traditional Amerindian cultures of pre-Columbian civilisations is mediated by cultural exchanges rather than the duality inherent to the hegemonic European art system where the *Other* is represented as *primitive*.

As such, the cultural project of modernity for Mexico City, represented by the construction of UNAM in Coyoacán, sought to erase the city's Hispanic colonial past and, at the same time, shape an imaginary of pre-Hispanic culture with the use of indigenous art on the artistic mural at UNAM Central Library. It aimed to reflect its permanence throughout the historical processes, since Mexico was home to one of the oldest Amerindian cultures in Latin America and, as Amaral underlined, values of ancestral societies are deeply rooted in Mexican culture (Amaral, 2006). As Mariátegui stated, "Politics and aesthetics were inseparable, and artists and intellectuals could not ignore the Indigenous revolts taking place during this period, Central Librarythus building a modernity of their own" (Mariátegui 1926, 3).

In contemporary times, other approaches are being put forward linking the topics of modernity and coloniality,[4] since the

[4] In Latin America, decolonial thought was introduced by Edgardo Lander; Arthuro Escobar; Walter Mignolo; Enrique Dussel; Anibal Quijano (founding member) and Fernando Coronil. This group of researchers (Grupo Modernidade

circulation of Indigenous art as artefacts outside their cultural contexts can obscure the violent processes of colonisation experienced by Indigenous peoples. In this regard, Mignolo points out that "the configuration of modernity in Europe and coloniality in the rest of the world (...), was the hegemonic image anchored on a colonial power hindered imagining that there can be no modernity without coloniality; that it is constitutive of modernity, not derivative" (Mignolo 1995, 75-76).

Fig. 2 Biblioteca/Library UNAM - Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mural by Juan O'Gorman, 1950. Source: Photo unidentified author

The European avant-garde's interest in the so-called *primitive* art of African and Oceanian cultures focuses on formal and esthetic aspects. In contrast, the interest manifested by Latin American modernism towards pre-Hispanic art, especially when analysing O'Gorman's mural *Historical Representation of Culture*, references the socio-cultural, economic, and spiritual aspects of the Amerindian population depicted.

The exhibition *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, held at MoMA, largely ignored pre-Hispanic art in the exhibition halls entitled *Concepts, History, Affinities* and *Contemporary Exploration*, displaying works of European avant-garde artists along with African and Oceanian objects, despite listing them in the exhibition catalogue, as James Clifford (1995, 209) observed. In the exhibition hall *Affinities*, modern European paintings and sculptures were displayed next to ethnographic and artistic objects from Africa and Oceania based on

/ Colonialidade) published important collective documents such as: *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas latinoamericanas*. Lander, E. (ed.), CLACSO, Buenos Aires, 2005.

a supposed common quality shared by tribal art and modern art, as a manifestation of wild nature. In doing so, it created an ahistorical display for the African and Oceanian art objects, whereas European works were accompanied by specifications (artist's description, techniques, date, etc.). Thus, modern art was understood not as an appropriation of *primitive* art, but rather as a holder of constitutive visual and technical elements of European avant-garde processes, as Clifford explained in his famous study based on his extensive research in modern and *primitive* art collections (Clifford 1996, 208).

The exhibition *Abstraccíon: El paradigma ameríndio (2001)*, curated by the Argentine artist, theorist and art critic Paternosto, renewed our understanding of modern art and *primitive* art by demonstrating the long permanence of abstract art among Amerindian peoples, based on new perspectives of art historiography. The exhibition included pre-Columbian works of art along with pieces by artists who used elements from Amerindian cultures, such as Gonzalo Fonseca and Anni Albers.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This essay sought to point out the cultural specificities of the Indigenous ethnicities depicted in O'Gorman's mural to highlight the complexity of his reception of modern and Amerindian art, so as not to produce an ahistorical analysis of pre-Hispanic art. In this perspective, the mural at UNAM's Central Library translates the cultural exchange operated by O'Gorman, without falling in the primitivist clichés of designating the *Other* as *primitive* or uncivilised. O'Gorman includes pre-Hispanic art in his mural, acknowledging its ethnicity. Its installation in territories and spaces coded as modern sought to erase the imaginary of coloniality in Mexico City, constituting potent images to resignify Amerindian culture. UNAM's library mural has, therefore, contributed to preserving Indigenous history in Mexican culture and Latin American art history.

José Carlos Mariátegui's *indigenism*, which advocated for incorporating European influences and pre-Hispanic Amerindian cultures into modernism, influenced artists and intellectuals in Latin American countries, especially Mexico, Argentina, and Peru, leading us to rethink and review modernism in light of contemporary Indigenous thought, concluding that Latin American modernism undoubtedly incorporated Indigenous art

and thought into modern art, but without the participation of the Indigenous groups themselves.

In this regard, the path taken by Jaider Esbell (1979-2021), Makuxi writer, artist and activist, of building a collective thought on "how to re-think the arts and modernist thought, not as a retrospective, but as a *rework*, against the commemorative and celebratory," as Librandi summarizes (2022, 780), is a proposal to be taken into account.

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POLITICS IN THE PORTUGUESE FUTURIST TEXTS: (NATIONAL) REFOUNDATION AND THE RETURN TO ORIGIN

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ABSTRACT

This essay analyses Portuguese futurist manifestos, and other texts produced by the Portuguese Futurism protagonists, highlighting the primitivist tropes they use, namely the idea of a "return to origin," and associating those tropes with the specificity of the Portuguese political situation during the first Republican period (1910-1918), focusing specially on the context of the Portuguese participation in the First World War.The essay discusses firstly the problematic concept of 'primitivism' and how nevertheless it can be paradoxically useful to study Futurism. Manifestos, pamphlets and poems by Raul Leal, António Ferro, Álvaro de Campos and Almada Negreiros are analysed considering the concept of "origin" they entrail and by considering their "context and performativity" (Foster), that is, their historicity and scope of impact. Consequently, their primitivist tropes are proved to be tied to Portuguese politics, specifically its imperialism which was in danger of collapsing since the nineteenth century and in particular in the context of the First World War, and the consequent contradictory positions regarding the stance either destructive or encomiastic of civilisation, either pro-war or against the war. Finally, this essay emphasises that the interpretation of the Portuguese futurist manifestos must acknowledge the parody of their Italian counterparts and elaborates, on the one hand, on the primitivist trope of childhood, seen as the matrix of fun and mockery and, on the other, the revolutionary power that humour entails.

1. WORKING WITH THE CONCEPT OF 'PRIMITIVISM': FUTURISM AND THE TROPE OF 'RETURN TO ORIGINS'

It may seem paradoxical to consider the concept of 'primitivism' as having anything to do with Futurism, but, as I will argue, it is a unvaluable lens to analyse a structural aspect of modernity that can also be found in Futurism, namely the colonial, identity-building elements in the trope of "return to origins".

A superficial approach to the term still prevails, which recognizes 'primitivism' as the mere aesthetic formal absorption of African or Oceanic art, failing to consider the complexity and multiple derivations of the significance of 'primitive' and 'primitivism'. In the 1996 volume edited by R. S. Nelson and R. Shiff about critical terms in art history, 'Primitive' was considered one of them. Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten approached the concept of the 'primitive' "as the product of the historical experience of the West and more specifically as an ideological construct of colonial conquest and exploitation" and considered that "the ideological import of the 'primitive' and of primitivism [could] be best grasped from the standpoint of a related set of oppositions mapped out in terms of time/space, gender, race, and class" (Antliff and Leighten, 1996: 217 and ff). Asian, African and Oceania art, children's art, folk art, the art from the mentally disordered, were seen as artistic sources that provided alternatives supposedly freed from western civilisation. Learning from those sources was a path for new formal experiments in art and a means to express and claim artistic modernity, as well as a return to origins and new beginnings.

Philippe Dagen has also emphasised the plurality of the term, claiming that it should be considered in the plural form (and in italics), *primitivismes*, because it is related with what he identifies as five instances of the primitive: the savage, the insane, the child, the pre-historic and the rustic (Dagen, 2019: 16). Dagen also considers that the *primitive* was a construction of western modernity embedded on colonialism and racism, not only to allow it to affirm itself as modern, opposing civilisation and barbarism, but also to function as a tool to criticise civilisation itself. Despite this critical approach, the five "modes" of the *primitive* that Dagen identifies somehow constrict the understanding of the term to categories that are too neatly delimited. In fact, the author emphasises that primitive and exotic are not synonyms, dismissing Western interest in China, Japan, India — the Orient in general — as distinct from primitivism, as well as dismissing the term when used to designate early renaissance painters, as

Italian, Dutch or French *Primitives* (Dagen, 2019: 15, 16).[1] However, as Edward Said showed in *Orientalism*, the exoticized view on Eastern cultures, most of them colonised, or formerly colonised, was a way to produce and control knowledge about the "Orient" and consequently to dominate it, to structure the way it could be imagined and represented, and to maintain a Western upper hand towards the "Orient" (Said, 1978: 7). In that way, considering primitivism as a constant production of the Other (and Said expresses how the Orient has been the most recurring image of the Other to the West), where a duality of identification and des-identification occurs and the "modern Western" subject always has the upper hand, the experience of the exotic, which also produces subalternity, should not be entirely dismissed as one of the instances of primitivism.[2] In a different way, the relation modern subjects constructed with the "self"-primitive they often found in their own national medieval and early renaissance cultures (for instance, artists from *Der Blaue Reiter* finding inspiration in medieval German imagery for their engravings and paintings) should also be considered when studying primitivist tropes.[3]

Postcolonial and decolonial theory have criticised, and sometimes questioned, the continuing of the use of the term. In the 2016 book *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism*, the concept of 'Alienation' was proposed as an alternative by Christopher Reed, who states that being alien, estranged or foreign, is embedded in definitions of modernism and modernity. 'Alienation' refers to the Marxist critique of capitalism, to the experience of exile as much as to an avant-garde convention. It also encompasses dynamics of 'alienation-identification' avoiding relegating those cast as 'exotic' or 'primitive' to passiveness and a fixed place in the social hierarchy or in an undetermined past (Reed,

[1] By leaving exoticism towards the idea of the "Orient" outside primitivism, Dagen therefore incurs in a hierarchisation himself, one between African and Asian cultures.

[2] "Under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient, and within the umbrella of Western hegemony over the Orient during the period from the end of the eighteenth century, there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character." (Said, 1978: 7-8).

[3] For a comprehensive analysis of primitivism in Iberian and Latin-American case-studies, as well as several theoretical discussions of the term, see Cunha Leal & Pinto dos Santos (eds.), 2024.

2016: 11-28). Therefore, *alienation* is a concept meant to recognise mobility and a non-binary interplay between subjects and it is useful to add it to a critical approach to the term 'primitivism', but to jettison the latter could risk the loss of perspective of the imperialist and colonialist contexts which allowed it to emerge. However, one of the insights *alienation* allows to bring forward in relation to *primitivism* is how it has implications with identity building, for it encompasses a process of differentiation and identification which is not resolved. Rather, it is a movement of wanting to be an-other without really stop being the privileged western, urban, sane, adult, civilised self. This movement, from identification to differentiation and back again, is part of what Homi Bhabha described as an "ethics of self-construction" that is the "essential gesture of Western modernity". The permanent reconstruction and reinvention of the *self* that also produces the *other-self* is, as Bhabha writes, ethnocentric. It does not really allow otherness, and it establishes cultural difference inasmuch as it remains the 'same', that is, within the strict boundaries of what can be called modernity, which excludes and subalternates extra-western subjects (Bhabha, 1994: 344 and ff).[4]

On another side, primitivism has to do with the urge to begin from scratch which amounts to an avant-garde trope, including in Futurism. If Peter Bürger established the avant-garde as an absolute origin, an event of immediate effect recognised as origin in itself, Hal Foster, in his critique of Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, demonstrated that the status of the avant-garde as origin is "a retroactive effect of countless artistic responses and critical readings" (Foster, 1996: 8). Nevertheless, being mindful of that "deferred temporality of artistic signification" does not mean to neglect the narrative of 'absolute origin' or 'beginning' that can be found in many avant-garde manifestos and practices. On the contrary, it means acknowledging modernity (of which avant-garde is part and parcel) as an "ideology of beginnings", "of the new" (Bhabha, 1994: 352), and therefore to recognise the paradoxical repetition and variants of the quest for the return to origins in the avant-garde practices. Bhabha further refers to the *terra incognita* or *terra nullius* which is represented by the colonial space and the part it plays in that ideology. This

[4] Bhabha addresses modernity as an epistemological structure and discusses how it was established as such by post-structuralist authors who associated spatialization and synchronicity to modernity, therefore excluding everything that did not belong to the "now" of modernity, that is, the colonial space. He proposes a post-colonial translation of modernity: a contra-modernity, that encompasses subaltern agency.

terra nullius image may as well be applied to the art objects that were systematically appropriated and used by twentieth century artists to *renovate* modern art. The *terra incognita* could also be the distant past, something that could be regarded both as mysterious, ultimately unreachable, but a place of a shared origin and source for present renewal.

The obsession with the idea of 'origin' in western thought is therefore connected with the colonial enterprise, which goes hand in hand with the "invention" of a distant pre-historic time in the nineteenth century (Gerolanous, 2024). Living human beings from conquered land where often deemed as "primitive" in the sense that they were seen as closer to less developed versions of mankind. In other words, they were seen as closer to humanity's "childhood", or humanity's origin, leading to enquiries into geological deep time (Gerolanous, 2024: 21 and ff). And therefore, they were also easily de-humanised in order to justify the image of *terra nullius*, de-occupied land that could be conquered by a "developed" version of humanity. Consequently, a relation with the pre-history of art, seen in the artifacts of indigenous people (or folk art), developed.

The art historian Maria Stavrinaki has dismissed the term "primitivism" as inadequate to explain the role played by pre-history in modern art since the 1920s (Stavrinaki 2018, 2022). According to Stavrinaki, modernity, by "forever reinventing pre-history, constantly reinvented itself" and "the conceptual and artistic uses of geological, paleontological, and artistic prehistory by moderns" have been misconstrued by historians "whether by overlooking them, or by confusing them with primitivism and archaism" (Stavrinaki, 2022: 17).[5] The main difference,

[5] Stavrinaki also points out the need to "to counteract the neutralizing effect of dualist symmetries" while studying modernity, that is "action and reaction, avant-garde and rear guard, modern and antimodern, revolutionaries and reactionaries. Such dualism has found a paradoxical, yet all the more striking expression in the disappearance pure and simple of the word 'moderns': 'we have never been modern.'" By criticizing this Bruno Latour's predictment as monolithic, she proposes instead to "reshape somewhat the identity of moderns" (Stavrinaki, 2022: 18). In that way, Stavrinaki is implying that the relation of modernity with pre-history somewhat contradicts the great divide between nature and culture that Latour diagnosed as a modern (unfulfilled) goal (Latour, 1991). However, this only confirms the idea that modern art's connection with pre-history is part of a wider scope of primitivism, since a "return to origin" or to a closer way of primordial (and natural) artistic expression is one of its manifestations. Moreover, Stravinaki presents an idea of modernity also based in "dualist symmetries": "Modernity is composed of regression as much as progress, doubt as much as certainty, deceleration as much as acceleration, the longue durée as much as change. It is this contradictory historicity that I wish to explore" (18) or "Modernity is both belated and premature, hypermnesiac and forgetful." (23).

the author argues, is that pre-history allowed for a "temporalization, a surplus of historicity" and the idea of an "autochthonous universal", because the finding of Paleolithic art in European soil meant that pre-history was part of European past, whether "similar finds in colonised territories could not have been attributed to such a remote past: the winds of history had never blown through these regions, considered to be timeless, if not in a state of degeneration." (Stavrinaki, 2022: 28). It is not within the scope of this essay to address the timeframe that Stavrinaki considers as the moment pre-history becomes more important than primitivism (after the 1920s). Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that Stavrinaki seems to perform a redemption of modernity by shifting the conceptual frame from primitivism to pre-history, claiming that "primitivism has always bore the mark of alterity" whether pre-history means a positive identification with humans from other era.[6] Notwithstanding the implications on the concept of historical time brought about by the invention of pre-history, the term primitivism cannot simply be relegated to an idea of formal appropriation and fetishisation of otherness.

Firstly, the search for renewal and the simplification or reduction of pictorial or sculptural forms found different inspirational sources regional, national and extra-european, and including ethnographic subjects (Clifford, 1981) or the nebulous of pre-history.[7]

Secondly, the production of otherness is directly implicated in the construction of the self (Torgovnick, 1990), and primitivism played a role in negotiating the construction of regional and national identities.[8] Furthermore, the allure for the enigma of the "origin" or "beginning" is an expression of the previously mentioned Western "ethics of self-construction" (Bhabha, 1994: 344), and in the image of *terra incognita* or *terra nullius* there is both a geographical and a temporal dimension, an external and internal factor, which enables the possibility of starting from scratch by reenacting a different space-time that nevertheless becomes an

[6] "[...] history lay between prehistory and modernity, and this gap was necessary for the modern dialectization of prehistory, that is, its historicization. At the same time, and this is hardly a contradiction, the awareness of moderns that they walked the same earth as the men and women of prehistory brought a sense of continuity that guaranteed their own identity." (Stravinaki, 2022: 28).

[7] This search for formal simplification is not unrelated to the changes in mass production brought about by the industrial revolution, and the optimisation of design and functionality.

[8] Several chapters in the book *The Primitivist Imaginary in Iberian and Transatlantic Modernisms* (2024) deal with this, for instance Antliff & Leighten, "Cosmopolitan cubism, provincial Paris".

expression of Western modernity. That is, the "template for the non-place of beginnings" (Bhabha, 1994: 352), becomes an emulation of the colonial space, combining *self* and *other-self*, in the sense that it provides the image of conquer, occupation, expansion and renewal that is precisely what can be found, as I intend to demonstrate, in some of the Portuguese futurist manifestos.

Joyce Cheng has emphazised how Western bourgeois modernity is material and symbolically dependent on its 'other' and the (self-) critique of Western bourgeois modernity is "inextricable from reflections and practices" (artistic but not only) that implicated European contact with non-European cultures, and which amount to the definition of 'primitivism'. Therefore, the author argues, the term may be seen as operating as "a critical machine aiming to aggravate the *crise de l'esprit* (Paul Valéry) within modern civilisation" (Cheng, 2018: 185) despite embedded in imperialism and colonialism. Thus, although the limitations and prejudices of the term 'primitivism' must be acknowledged, dismissing it completely may lead to overlook a structural aspect of modernity, one that can also be found in Futurism.

As already put forward by authors such as Marjorie Perloff and Rosalind Krauss, the trope of the 'return to origins' can be identified in Futurism. Marinetti's 1909 *Manifesto del Futurismo* narrates how he crashed into the "maternal ditch" of industrial waste where he tastes the "factory drain" as the milk he tasted from the "black breast of his Sudanese nurse" (Marinetti, 1973 [1909]). Perloff and Krauss have underlined how this is a metaphor for the return to the womb, a rebirth from an amniotic liquid made of industrial waste from which a new futurist, self-created, man emerged (Perloff, 1986: 87; Krauss, 1986: 157). Krauss' reading of Marinetti's manifesto deconstructs the myth of originality of the avant-garde by demonstrating that originality was not about producing the original and unique artwork (in fact, embracing technology meant embracing reproduction and repetition), but it was conceived as a return to origin, a restart from scratch, a "beginning from ground zero" freed from tradition: "The self as origin is safe from contamination by tradition because it possesses a kind of originary naiveté. [...] The self as origin has the potential for continual acts of regeneration, a perpetuation of self-birth." (Krauss, 1986: 157).

Therefore, "the futurist moment" established a temporal rupture which became the paradigm of avant-garde, in which the possibility of the future was actually frozen in an eternal beginning. Going back to Homi Bhabha's postcolonial analysis, the "ethics of self-construction" of modernity meant being stuck in

the "now" of modernity that excluded "non-modern" subjects. "Now" was the motto for rupture and beginning again, aiming at a fantasised promised future never to be reached. However, the mythical pure origin implicated going back to a pre-modern status. Marinetti's mention of his Sudanese nurse's breast illustrates better than anything else the belief in the need of regression in order to progress, the need of going back to a primitive realm in order to reimagine the future — while expressing in a nutshell the colonialist mindset in which avant-garde emerges.

2. THE PORTUGUESE FUTURIST MANIFESTOS AND THE 'RETURN TO ORIGIN' TROPE

It is usually considered that the Portuguese Futurist Manifestos include four texts written by Almada Negreiros (1893-1970), and the *Ultimatum* signed by one of Fernando Pessoa's (1888-1935) heteronyms, Álvaro de Campos. Other two texts are sometimes referred, *Nós* by António Ferro (1895-1956) and *O Bando Sinistro* by Raul Leal (1888-1964). In the southern region of Portugal, in the city of Faro, the newspaper *Heraldo de Faro* inaugurated a section on Futurism that would run from February 4th to August 26th, 1917 (Parreira da Silva, 2023: 222), but no manifestos were published there. In Coimbra, there was a reaction to Lisbon Futurism that sought to turn it against itself. The texts used the syntax and structure of some of the futurist writings of the Lisboners to criticise them and denounce their authors as false futurists (Marnoto, 1994).[9] I shall comment on the politics, and the trope of 'return to origin' in Leal's, Campos', Ferro's and Almada's writings, leaving aside the Coimbra's manifestations for they do not share some of the characteristics found in the other texts.

The texts associated with Futurism must be considered eclectic and they emerged by combining different aesthetic sources and different interpretations of what Futurism could be. Futurism was agitating Europe, especially Paris, where several Portuguese writers and artists had travelled (Mário de Sá-Carneiro [1890-1916)], Guilherme de Santa-Rita [1889-1918], Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso [1887-1918], José Pacheko [1885-1934], among others), giving notice of what was happening there to the ones remaining in Portugal (as Almada Negreiros and Fernando Pessoa). The

[9] This was protagonised mainly by Francisco Levita, starting in 1916 with a response to Almada's *Manifesto Anti-Dantas*. See Marnoto, 1994.

reception of Futurism and other isms happened in the context of the falling of the Portuguese monarchy, with the assassination of the king, and the establishment of a republican regime (1910).

Most of these authors and artists were part or close to the *Orpheu* project, the literary magazine founded by poets Fernando Pessoa and Mário de Sá-Carneiro in 1915 that inaugurated the Portuguese avant-garde. That meant it was often associated with Futurism, although it never claimed to be a futurist magazine. *Orpheu* n. 2 was nevertheless marked by futurist echoes, and featured poems that play with language and onomatopoeias, as well as the use of typography, but it reinterpreted, transformed and used Futurism as a tool for disruption. It only had two published issues and a third one planned, but never printed, of which there are surviving typographical proofs. The magazine stirred the established intellectual Portuguese elite with provocative language and inaugurating a new poetic aesthetics. *Orpheu* published some of the most important poems by Pessoa/Campos and Mário de Sá-Carneiro, while also including painting, featuring in the second issue four reproductions of Santa-Rita's collages. Their collaborators and directors were extremely critical of the Republic, which had quickly amounted to a succession of crisis, authoritarian regimes and persecutions, and some of them, as Raul Leal or Guilherme de Santa- Rita, openly embraced monarchy.

The authors of manifestos and texts inspired by Futurism that will be commented in the next pages were mainly collaborators of *Orpheu*: Pessoa/Campos, Raul Leal and Almada Negreiros. And António Ferro was part of the tertulia that gathered around them.

2.1 THE MANIFESTO *O BANDO SINISTRO*, BY RAUL LEAL AND THE POEM *A CENA DO ÓDIO* BY ALMADA NEGREIROS

O Bando Sinistro [The Sinister Gang] is a pamphlet written by Raul Leal, who signed it as a "*Orpheu* collaborator". It was supposedly printed in Barcelona (Almeida, 2015: 583-584)[10] and distributed on July 3rd 1915. It was only rediscovered in 2015 and

[10] António Almeida puts forward the hypothesis that it was secretly printed in a press in Lisbon but announced as printed in Barcelona. Guilherme de Santa Rita was very much involved in the printing of the pamphlet (Almeida, 2015). They probably circulated the idea of it being printed in Barcelona in order not put the Lisbon typography at risk.

published in a catalogue organised by Richard Zenith celebrating the 100th anniversary of *Orpheu* (Zenith, 2015: 184-185).[11]

Raul Leal was a poet and writer that signed some of his texts as "Henoch", a name from esoteric Judaism. He participated in the *Orpheu* n. 2 magazine with a short story titled "Atelier" in which he proclaimed a Nietzschean aesthetic existence, using repeatedly the term "vertigo", at times with some sexual innuendo (Leal, 1915). Although Raul Leal signs *O Bando Sinistro* deliberately associating himself with the symbol of the Portuguese aesthetic modernity, *Orpheu*, his manifesto has a direct political focus. In fact, Raul Leal attacks the "sinister gang" of Afonso Costa, a prominent figure since the establishment of the Republican regime in Portugal and associated with the regicide that ended monarchy in Portugal in 1910.[12] He assumed different political responsibilities and was President of the Ministry of Portugal (equivalent to Prime Minister) four times between 1913 and 1917, at a time when governments fell constantly due to succeeding crisis. Raul Leal probably plays with the triple meaning of the word "Sinistro" in Portuguese: it means terrifying, but it can also refer to an accident or disaster, and to being left-handed or with a left political orientation.[13]

Costa, who led what was considered a left-wing party — the Democratic Party[14] —, had just instigated a military coup on May 14th, 1915, that resulted in more than two hundred dead and one thousand wounded, and ended the government of Pimenta de Castro (Serra, 2021: 93-128). This coup, fighting a supposed danger of the restoration of monarchy, was also meant to force the participation of Portugal in the First World War, and indeed in March 1916 Germany and Austria would declare war to Portugal.[15] Curiously, on the day the pamphlet was distributed Afonso Costa jumped out of an electric bus because he heard an explosion (caused by a short circuit) and thought it was an attempt on his life. It was a coincidence, since the pamphlet was printed before.

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[11] The original pamphlet reproduced in the catalogue is at Yale University.

[12] See Manuela Alves, "Regicídio: 'Lembro-me', recorda filha de Manuel Buíça", *Diário de Lisboa*, 1 February 1984.

[13] Many thanks to Noemí De Haro who pointed out this reading to me. "Sinistro" as "Left" is an old meaning, no longer in use.

[14] Afonso Costa tried to absorb other left-wing currents in order to command a single Democratic party, and he often persecuting labourers and unions (Serra, 2021: 93-128).

[15] Germany declared war to Portugal after the apprehension of German ships that were stationed in Portuguese ports, following the request made by Great Britain (Oliveira Marques, 1991: 711-713).

Although strongly insulting, the pamphlet's vocabulary is much more symbolist than futurist and lacks the precision (it doesn't have any theses) and clarity needed for a mass audience. Therefore, it falls short of "*de la violence et de la précision*" Marinetti claimed necessary for the new artistic genre of the manifesto (Perloff, 1986: 81). Its violence, aimed at Afonso Costa, is conveyed in an over-expressive symbolist language that seeks to portrait a muddy, plebeian, and hateful atmosphere associated with Costa's rule, while defending monarchy.[16] The symbolic language is close to other manifestations associated with the deflagration of the war in 1914. Although this manifesto should be considered when discussing the politics of the *Orpheu* project, I believe it gravitates around a generic idea of Futurism as provocation and intervention without really using futurist language. Furthermore, by attacking so directly a single character of national politics and excluding aesthetic considerations, its scope is exclusively political.

The controversy that arose from the distribution of Leal's manifesto, as well as Pessoa's public statements against Afonso Costa (Almeida, 2015: 594-598),[17] made the publishing of *Orpheu* n. 3 more difficult because there was a serious risk of publishing a magazine that could be related with previous attacks on Afonso Costa, who was known for persecuting and even murdering his political opponents. The third issue would indeed have escalated

[16] An example: "Costa sente bem a sua propria inferioridade, incapaz se sente de se elevar ao Espirito, de se elevar até Deus, é n'um charco imundo que elle se debate por entre chammas purulentas de peste, e, cheio de raiva, de rancores sinistros, a sua fétida baba derrama na Vida para que a Vida, descendo até elle, se cubra de podridão e de ignominia" [Costa feels his own inferiority well, he feels incapable of rising to the Spirit, of rising to God, he struggles in a filthy quagmire amidst the purulent flames of plague, and, full of rage, of sinister grudges, his fetid drool spills onto Life so that Life, descending to him, is covered in rot and ignominy]. Transcribed in Almeida, 2015: 572.

[17] Leal's pamphlet was followed by a letter by Pessoa (signed Álvaro de Campos) to the newspaper *A Capital* (5 July 1915) of which only an excerpt appeared stating: "It would be in bad taste to repudiate links with futurism at such a deliciously mechanical time when Divine Providence itself is using electric cars for its high teachings". Names such as Alfredo Guisado and António Ferro publicly repudiated the *Orpheu* authors political attacks on Afonso Costa, Mário de Sá-Carneiro also wrote to the newspaper stating Campos' and Leal's writings did not represent *Orpheu* (7 July 1915) and Armando Côrtes-Rodrigues also stated his discordance towards those opinions (9 July 1915). Afonso Costa's political militia, A Formiga Branca [The White Ant] attempted to attack Pessoa at the restaurant Irmãos Unidos (which belonged to Alfredo Guisado), supposedly due to Almada Negreiros inadvertently exposing that Pessoa and Campos were the same person (this information is advanced by António Almeida in the cited essay although he does not provide any source for it).

the provocation, namely with Almada Negreiros' poem *A Cena do Ódio* [The Hate Scene].

In fact, the long poem by Almada meant to be included in the never printed *Orpheu* n. 3, must be reread in light of *O Bando Sinistro*. In 1923 a truncated and modified version was published as an appendix of the magazine *Contemporânea* with the dedication "To Álvaro de Campos // excerpts of a derailed poem written in the three days and three nights that lasted the revolution of May 14th 1915".[18] In the unpublished proofs of *Orpheu* n. 3,[19] as well as in the manuscript currently at the National Library of Portugal, the poem is dated May 14th 1915. This means that *A Cena do Ódio* was written specifically in the context of Afonso Costa's coup and in response to it. Even if Almada's description of writing the poem during the three days and three nights of the revolution is a mythicised narrative, the fact remains that by describing it so and by dating it from May 14th, Almada is undoubtedly stating that the poem is a response to the coup. The "hate" mentioned in the title and in the poem has a specific political target, and it is worth noting that "hate" is probably the most frequent word in Raul Leal's pamphlet. Leal's hate was directed against Costa, and we can infer, despite Almada being much more ambiguous and never naming him, that his hate had the same target.

What does his hate do? He writes "My Hate is the Lantern of Diogenes, / the blindness of Diogenes" from which we can infer that he is proposing his poem as a cynical exercise. He will do like Diogenes and use a lantern to find a man during daylight, that is, he too will express how there are no worthy men. Like Diogenes, he too will scorn civilisation and its hypocrisies. The poem goes on, mainly with exclamations and a violent language against all the comfortable bourgeois conquests of the so-called civilisation or so-called culture. At one point, the attacks include those who laugh at *Orpheu*. But then, in the middle of the torrent, some verses are quite explicit: "Disrobe yourself of your uniform /disrobe yourself of the Imposture, stand naked and raw /and you will be unemployed! [...] there's more to life than starting revolutions!"[20] These verses are quite frontal in stating that those who "take off their uniform" will be exposed and lose their work, and the negative reference to "revolutions" couldn't be clearer in its association with the May 14th events. He also dismisses war,

[18] *Contemporânea* 7, January 1923.

[19] These proofs were published in a facsimile edition only in 1983. *Orpheu* 3, fac-símile. Porto: Nova Renascença.

[20] Translation by Jethro Soutar, included in *Nós os de Orpheu/ We, The Orpheu Lot*, 57-72.

by being cynical about those who want to make it: "Get to work making a bomb /a bomb so big / it will be ten times the radius of the Earth. / Stuff it with all of Europe, / both poles and the Americas, / Palestine, Greece, the entire globe / and please don't forget Portugal! / Have done with planet, / become God of the World just to end it! (My God, there are so many things to do in life, / and these people distract themselves with wars!)". He attacks multiple manifestations of the installed culture, of the established society, the traditional family, acquired knowledge, etc. He exhorts the 'unlearning' ("Uninstruct yourself, uncultivate yourself, unpolish yourself"), the forsaken of civilisation, and even proclaims: "Become reborn!". The self-regeneration and the return to a primordial state is even more underlined in the verses: "Let horns grow instead of civilisation! / I loved you as a cannibal because you ate your own: / maybe the World was a world then / and not the lavatory it is now!".

The primitivist tropes of returning to origin, escaping civilisation, and remerging with Nature ("start living in Nature!") are present, as much as the prejudice of colonial rule: "I shall rebuild black slavery in you!" is a verse that mirrors the perverse metaphorical association between the idea of returning to the origin and the idea of renewing the dominating powers of colonisation.[21] The predication of unlearning, in turn, is also to be found in another of Pessoa's heteronyms, Alberto Caeiro, namely in his set of poems *O Guardador de Rebanhos* [The Keeper of Sheep] (first published in 1925, but dated 1915) and later in the praise for naivety by Almada himself, in his 1921 book *A Invenção do Dia Claro* [The Invention of the Bright Day] (Pinto dos Santos, 2025).

2.2 *NÓS* AND *A IDADE DO JAZZ-BAND* BY ANTÓNIO FERRO

António Ferro played with the avant-garde vocabulary, using it as a sign of modernity, but he was not really a collaborator of

[21] In a recent book, Ignacio Infante inquiries about this poem being a response and stance made by Almada in relation to his father's ethnographic writings and his traditionalist colonialist views, which is an interesting but highly speculative hypothesis that misses the connection to what was happening in national politics. It also skips commenting that Almada had been estranged from his father since the age of three. Infante analyses manifestos by Almada with a postcolonial perspective, but he largely ignores recent and less recent works on Almada and other Portuguese authors such as Pessoa. He engages mostly with a 1966 book on Portuguese Futurism (João Alves das Neves' *O Movimento Futurista em Portugal*) which has been long outdated (Infante, 2023: 24-55).

Orpheu.[22] The *Nós* [We] manifesto was self-published in 1921 and republished in Brazil in 1922 in the magazine *Klaxon* n. 2 — a publication inaugurated in the aftermath of the Modern Art Week of S. Paulo that same year. Ferro was in Brazil at the time, making several conferences, most notably the conference *A Idade do Jazz-Band* [The Age of Jazz-Band]. In this conference, all the primitivist imagery and prejudice towards African Art and black bodies is in action, by seeing in them a truth only found in infancy: "The influence of black art on modern art is indisputable. Modern art is synthesis. Black people have always had the instinct for synthesis. Black people stayed in childhood — to stay in truth. The child is the abbreviation for Nature. Children, crazy people, and black people are the drafts of Humanity, the theses that God developed and complicated. There is no Rodin sculpture that has the truth of a manipanso [African fetish]." (Ferro, 1987 (1922): 216). Ferro referred to the *jazz-band* as the "restlessness of a woman's body", associating the velocity of modern age with the age of dancing female (black) bodies, while rejecting the past, romanticism and the moonlight (in a reference to Marinetti's second manifesto, "Kill the Moonlight!"), and praising futility, nightlife and joyfulness. The jazz-band, he writes, is the age of rebirth, and implicitly, he is referring to a rebirth after the war, that he considers having transformed humans in "drafts of race" to be remoulded.[23]

In contrast, the manifesto *Nós*, presented in a short theatrical structure, has no echo of the primitivist tropes in the *jazz-band* conference, which, although not a manifesto, refers to topics that were found in the Futurist manifestos and adopts some of its provocative language (Ferro 1987 (1921): 147-152). It is structured in a dialogue between "I" and a "Crowd", in which the "I" prevails as the only one that understands the "present Hour", that is, the only one that is at pace with progress and modernity. Ferro praises the machines (trains, aeroplanes) and the "Great War, the Great War of Art!", but this is a short emulation of previous futurist manifestos, Portuguese or Italian. The "I" prevails isolated, and in fact, there is hardly any "We" involved, despite the title. Therefore, *A Idade do*

[22] António Ferro was not a collaborator of *Orpheu* — Pessoa and Mário de Sá-Carneiro made him the editor of *Orpheu* because he was underaged and therefore could not be arrested if there were to be any trouble. (Pessoa, 2015: 151). Also, his republican politics in favour of Afonso Costa estranged him from the *Orpheu* members.

[23] "The Great War gave such insignificancy to human life that it transformed it in drafts of race, in which the skin, the bones, the flesh, all lost value as if they were money, and instead silk, cashmere, velvet, organdies, crêpe gained importance…" (Ferro, 1987 (1922): 205).

Jazz-Band stands much closer to the tone and quality of a manifesto, despite Ferro's intentions. The fact that it was presented as a conference in a Brazilian context, escalates its implications and significance, since the text celebrates black dancing bodies and music in a former Portuguese colonised territory, where the configuration of race had been determined by the slave trade perpetuated by Portugal for centuries. Moreover, the Brazilian independence proclaimed in 1822 had not been propelled by indigenous or enslaved people revolts, but by white European and Portuguese settlers[24] that kept the discriminatory policies intact even after slavery was abolished on May 13th, 1888. Therefore, Ferro's conference/manifesto in 1922 gave a modern dressing to old prejudices, attributing exotic and fetishised value to them.

2.3 *ULTIMATUM* BY ÁLVARO DE CAMPOS

Pessoa wrote derogatorily about futurism in literature, considering it nothing more than a "typographical phenomenon" (Pessoa, 2015: 54). Probably in 1922, he wrote a (never published) fake interview as if revisiting *Orpheu* and its derivations,[25] in which he mentioned that "I never accepted Futurism, never sympathised with Futurism, or ever — not even as *blague* — wrote anything similar to Futurism" (Pessoa, 2015: 152-153). This may be true for Pessoa, but not for his heteronym Álvaro de Campos. In the same 'interview' Pessoa tells how he simulated having received from Galicia the poem by Álvaro de Campos "Ode Triunfal" [Triumphal Ode] for *Orpheu 1*, which is a poem that recurs to onomatopoeias and punctuation akin to futurist poetry, besides praising factories, trains, electricity, music-halls, etc., and how others received it not knowing yet Álvaro de Campos and Fernando Pessoa were the same person: "I remember Almada Negreiros, after reading enthusiastically 'Ode Triunfal' strongly shaking my arm because of my lack of enthusiasm, and saying to me, outraged: 'This may not be how you write, but it is life itself!.' I felt only his friendship saved me from hearing him say that Álvaro de Campos was much better than me".[26] Almada was a strong

[24] The independence of Brazil was proclaimed by Pedro, the son of the Portuguese king, João VI. He became Pedro I of Brazil from 1822 to 1831, but in 1826 became also king of Portugal as Pedro IV, and fought his brother Miguel in what became known as the liberal civil war, and accumulating both reigns.

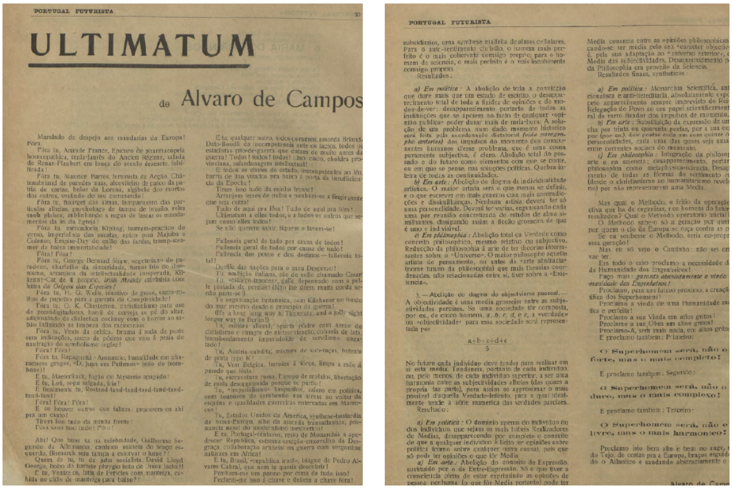
[25] The text was written in letterhead paper from an office created by Pessoa in 1922 and was published for the first time in 1968.

[26] Almada, in turn, would later recall a different version. In 1965, in an homage to the fiftieth anniversary of *Orpheu* he wrote: "One day at the 'Irmãos

enthusiast of the Futurism he recognized in Campos' poem. In his various unpublished notes on *Orpheu*, Pessoa himself states that Campos' was a better Futurism than the Italian original and that he achieved what the international futurists were trying to do without fully accomplish it, and exceeded them (Pessoa, 2015: 33 and 118). It is no surprise, then, to find the heteronym Campos, an experimental futurist, signing a futurist manifesto that parodies, to a large extent, the futurist manifesto formulas.

That manifesto was *Ultimatum*, published in the only issue of *Portugal Futurista*, the 1917 Portuguese Futurist magazine that had no circulation since it was seized by the police just after it was printed. The text is reminiscent of Émile Zola's *J'Accuse* by recurring to the strategy of repeting "Fora tu!" [Off with you!] in several paragraphs, followed by naming literary authors such as Anatole France, Kipling, Yeats, H.G. Wells, Chesterton, Annunzio, and others (all of them, then or later, part of Pessoa's personal library). It also shows a strong political charge, with allusions to the national and international situation. Therefore, the *Ultimatum*, the title being a reference to the trauma of the British Ultimatum of 1890 in which Britain demanded immediate withdraw of Portuguese forces from African territories in the radar of British interests, was both a literary and a political manifesto, mixing aesthetic and politics in its demands. It associates the decadence and failure of the political situation, including the ongoing war, to a diagnosis of decadence and failure of the cultural situation and appeals to the foundation of a "New World": "I, a descendant of the race of the Discoverers, despise anything less than discovering a New World!" (Campos, 1917: 32). Referencing Nietzsche, he writes that the Christian civilisation established after the Middle Ages has to be extinct and he ends his text explicitly referring to the new man, the "Super-man" who shall be the most complete, the most complex and the most harmonic. The foundation of humanity, the rebirth trope, is clear in Campos manifesto. But it is also clear the mocking character of it when, knowing that he determined that the heteronymous Álvaro de Campos profession was Engineering, he states that the new humanity will be the "Humanity of the Engineers!".

Unidos' restaurant Fernando Pessoa had received a poem entitled 'Ode Triunfal.' He didn't know if it was from a Portuguese author or a Galician one that knew well how to write Portuguese. He gave it to me to read. At the first verse I jumped up on the table until the last verse. I went downstairs and said to Fernando Pessoa: 'Álvaro de Campos, please, when you meet Fernando Pessoa, give him a good kick in the arse.'" (Almada Negreiros, 1965: 14).



PORTUGAL FUTURISTA

ULTIMATUM

de Alvaro de Campos

PORTUGAL FUTURISTA

Fig. 1. First and last page of *Ultimatum* by Álvaro de Campos. *Portugal Futurista*, 1917.

Nevertheless, it is significant that he ends by stating "I declare this loud and clear, on the Tagus estuary, with my back to Europe, arms raised, gazing at the Atlantic and abstractly saluting Infinity". He turns his back to European civilisation and looks to the Atlantic as the "one that shares the race of the discoverers", but now a discoverer-engineer that must look away from civilisation to be able to regenerate himself. In other words, he must re-discover the *terra nullius* as his predecessors have done, to restart the colonial enterprise.[27] This has, of course, political implications, since the 1914-1918 war was as an imperial one and Portugal participated in it to avoid the risk of losing its colonies and even with the prospect of increasing its territory in Africa (Meneses, 2021: 400), as well to affirm its young Republican regime in the international scene (Marques, 2021: 317). So, it could be said that what is being proclaimed in Campos' *Ultimatum* is the restarting of a new empire rather than going to war to fight for the colonies of the past.

As showed by *O Bando Sinistro* and the documented political history of the collaborators of *Orpheu*, Leal, Pessoa, or Almada, they all were fiercely against the Democratic Party led by Afonso

[27] For a thorough analysis on Pessoa and the empire as modern imagery, as well as his ideas on the Portuguese situation in the West see Russo, 2024: 37-66 and 113-130.

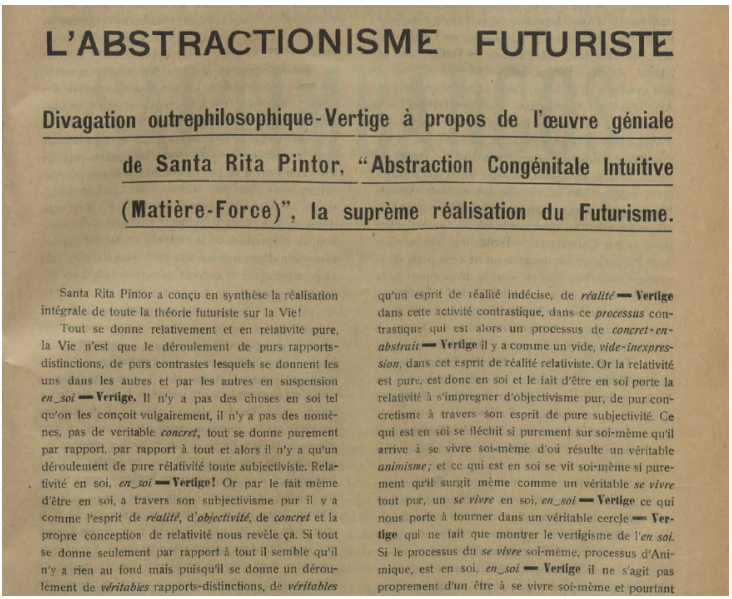
Costa, as well as his war policy.[28] Therefore, there is a particularity in the Portuguese avant-garde also expressed in *A Cena do Ódio* by Almada: they are not in favour of the participation in the First World War. Notwithstanding, the metaphor for restarting civilisation is illustrated with the image of a new empire, albeit an aesthetic one — that is: the conquest to be made is through the affirmation of literature and art, and not by occupying territory.

2.4 ALMADA NEGREIROS' MANIFESTOS

Almada's manifestos were written and published in a short period of time, between 1916 and 1917, and they are of two kinds. Two of them denounce the obsolete art of the past, as well as the vices and bourgeois tastes of a complacent society — manifestos that could be called "negative"; and two others urge the public to enjoy the exponents of modernity and the avant-garde that could be seen in the country at the time of writing — manifestos that could be called "positive". They all operate in a performative language, common to the avant-garde manifestos of the early twentieth century.

It must be noted that another text by Raul Leal published in French in *Portugal Futurista* is also very performative, and could be considered a manifesto in favour of Futurism, much more than *O Bando Sinistro* previously analysed. The text is about Guilherme Santa-Rita, whom Leal sees as the only single artist that truly expresses Futurism. It is the text "L'abstractionisme Futuriste. Divagation outrephilosophique-Vertige à propos de l'oeuvre géniale de Santa Rita Pintor, 'Abstraction Congénitale Intuitive (Matiére-Force)', la suprème réalisation du Futurisme". It has a play of words in which "Vertige" is the more often employed, trying to express Santa Rita's paintings as never concrete, always in motion, "Dynamique", and therefore "abstract".

[28] Alfredo Guisado and António Ferro were republicans in favour of Afonso Costa. Pessoa expressed Republican ideas but he was against Afonso Costa and in favour of the dictator Pimenta de Castro, opponent to Afonso Costa and the target of the May 14th, 1915 coup inflicted by Costa (Parreira da Silva, 2000). Not only did he publish attacks on Afonso Costa but also wrote the unpublished 1915 "Oligarquia das Bestas" [Oligarchy of the beasts] where many of his ideas can be found. The republicans in favour of Afonso Costa were mainly against Orpheu and most of the attacks on the magazine came from the Republican intellectual elite. Afonso Costa's party relied on a militia called Formiga Branca [White Ant] that threatened, beat, or even murdered political adversaries. Pessoa was threatened in 1915 (Almeida, 2015: 596), and Almada Negreiros was beaten in 1917 (Affonso, 1983: 46).



L'ABSTRACTIONISME FUTURISTE

Divagation outrephilosophique-Vertige à propos de l'œuvre géniale de Santa Rita Pintor, "Abstraction Congénitale Intuitive (Matière-Force)", la suprème réalisation du Futurisme.

Santa Rita Pintor a conçu en synthèse la réalisation intégrale de toute la théorie futuriste sur la Vie!

Tout se donne relativement et en relativité pure, la Vie n'est que le déroulement de purs rapports-distinctions, de purs contrastes lesquels se donnent les uns dans les autres et par les autres en suspension *en_soi* — **Vertige.** Il n'y a pas des choses en soi tel qu'on les conçoit vulgairement, il n'y a pas des nomènes, pas de veritable *concret*, tout se donne purement par rapport, par rapport à tout et alors il n'y a qu'un déroulement de pure rélativité toute subjectiviste. Relativité en soi, *en_soi* — **Vertige!** Or par le fait même d'être en soi, à travers son subjectivisme pur il y a comme l'esprit de *réalité*, d'*objectivité*, de *concret* et la propre conception de relativité nous revèle ça. Si tout se donne seulement par rapport à tout il semble qu'il n'y a rien au fond mais puisqu'il se donne un déroulement de *véritables* rapports-distinctions, de *véritables* qu'un esprit de réalité indécise, de *réalité* — **Vertige** dans cette activité contrastique, dans ce *processus* contrastique qui est alors un processus de *concret-en-abstrait* — **Vertige** il y a comme un vide, *vide-inexpression*, dans cet esprit de réalité relativiste. Or la relativité est pure, est donc en soi et le fait d'être en soi porte la relativité à s'impregner d'objectivisme pur, de pur concretisme à travers son esprit de pure subjectivité. Ce qui est en soi se fléchit si purement sur soi-même qu'il arrive à se vivre soi-même d'où résulte un véritable *animisme;* et ce qui est en soi se vit soi-même si purement qu'il surgit même comme un véritable *se vivre* tout pur, un *se vivre* en soi, *en_soi* — **Vertige** ce qui nous porte à tourner dans un véritable cercle — **Vertige** qui ne fait que montrer le vertigisme de l'*en soi*. Si le processus du *se vivre* soi-même, processus d'Animique, est en soi, *en_soi* — **Vertige** il ne s'agit pas proprement d'un être à se vivre soi-même et pourtant

Fig. 2 Raul Leal's "L'abstractionisme Futuriste. Divagation outrephilosophique-Vertige à propos de l'oeuvre géniale de Santa Rita Pintor, 'Abstraction Congénitale Intuitive (Matiére-Force)', la suprème réalisation du Futurisme" published in *Portugal Futurista*, 1917.

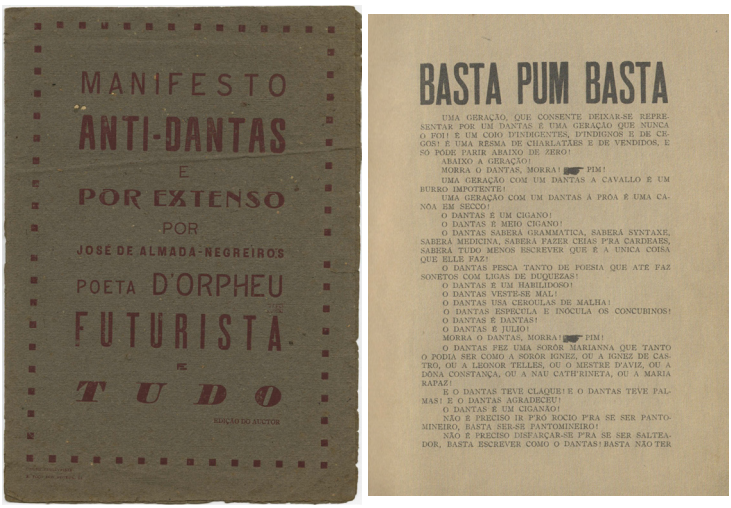
The first of Almada's 'negative' manifestos, the *Manifesto Anti-Dantas*, was published in 1916 and was, legend has it, bought almost in its entirety by its target, Júlio Dantas (1876-1962). Dantas, a writer and a doctor, was the symbol of institutionalised culture. At the time, he disqualified the *Orpheu* magazine, and his medical studies on madness were evoked in the newspapers to diagnose the group as lunatic.[29] The pretext for the manifesto had been his play *Soror Mariana*, performed on October 21st 1915, to which Almada immediately reacted by writing the manifesto and reading it aloud to a group of friends, even if the pamphlet was only published after June 1916.[30]

The manifesto was written entirely in capital letters, and throughout the text there is a recurrent use of a typographic hand

[29] "Litteratura de Manicomio – Os poetas do 'Orpheu' foram já scientificamente estudados por Júlio Dantas, há 15 annos, ao occupar-se dos 'artistas' de Rilhafolles – Casos de paranoia – Tem a palavra o sr. Julio de Mattos", in *A Capital – Diário Republicano da Noite*, 30 March 1915, 1.

[30] Almada promised Sonia Delaunay (1885-1979), at the time living with her husband Robert Delaunay in Vila do Conde in the north of Portugal, the first copy of the printed manifesto in a letter dated 30 May 1916 (Ferreira, 1972: 176).

with an index finger raised that works visually like a mock revolver. The typeface and the 'shots' fired by the onomatopoeias next to the index pointing hand ("PIM!") amplify the invective of the text through the graphic appearance, carrying out the literary assassination of Júlio Dantas. The onomatopoeia "PUM!", more associated to the firing of a gun, appears only in the beginning of the text, and then it changes to "PIM!", which works in fact like a comic and childish version of the first one. The medium undoubtedly intensifies the message, and each page functions not only as a vehicle for the text, but also as an image. This also happens in the cover, made of grey paper with dark red lettering with a graphic composition typical of a poster, with a mixture of different fonts.


MANIFESTO
ANTI-DANTAS
E
POR EXTENSO
POR
JOSÉ DE ALMADA-NEGREIROS
POETA D'ORPHEU
FUTURISTA
TUDO
EDIÇÃO DO AUCTOR

BASTA PUM BASTA

UMA GERAÇÃO, QUE CONSENTE DEIXAR-SE REPRESENTAR POR UM DANTAS É UMA GERAÇÃO QUE NUNCA O FOI! É UM COIO D'INDIGENTES, D'INDIGNOS E DE CEGOS! É UMA RESMA DE CHARLATÃES E DE VENDIDOS, E SÓ PODE PARIR ABAIXO DE ZERO!
ABAIXO A GERAÇÃO!
MORRA O DANTAS, MORRA! PIM!
UMA GERAÇÃO COM UM DANTAS A CAVALLO É UM BURRO IMPOTENTE!
UMA GERAÇÃO COM UM DANTAS Á PROA É UMA CANOA EM SECCO!
O DANTAS É UM CIGANO!
O DANTAS É MEIO CIGANO!
O DANTAS SABERA GRAMMATICA, SABERÁ SYNTAXE, SABERÁ MEDICINA, SABERÁ FAZER CRIAS PRA CARDEAES, SABERÁ TUDO MENOS ESCREVER QUE É A UNICA COISA QUE ELLE FAZ!
O DANTAS PESCA TANTO DE POESIA QUE ATE FAZ SONETOS COM LIGAS DE DUQUEZAS!
O DANTAS É UM HABILIDOSO!
O DANTAS VESTE-SE MAL!
O DANTAS USA CEROULAS DE MALHA!
O DANTAS ESPECULA E INOCULA OS CONCUBINOS!
O DANTAS É DANTAS!
O DANTAS É JULIO!
MORRA O DANTAS, MORRA! PIM!
O DANTAS FEZ UMA SORÓR MARIANNA QUE TANTO O PODIA SER COMO A SORÓR RINEZ, OU A RONEZ DE CASTRO, OU A LEONOR TELLES, OU O MESTRE D'AVIZ, OU A DONA CONSTANÇA, OU A NAU CATH'RINETA, OU A MARIA RAPAZ!
E O DANTAS TEVE CLAQUE! E O DANTAS TEVE PALMAS! E O DANTAS AGRADECEU!
O DANTAS É UM CIGANO!
NÃO É PRECISO IR P'RÓ ROCIO PRA SE SER PANTOMINEIRO, BASTA SER-SE PANTOMINEIRO!
NÃO É PRECISO DISFARÇAR-SE P'RA SE SER SALTEADOR, BASTA ESCREVER COMO O DANTAS! BASTA NÃO TER

Fig 3. Cover and first page of Almada's *Manifesto Anti-Dantas e por extenso*, 1916

As for the text, it was a direct critique of Júlio Dantas' play with a detailed humorous description. This drama was chosen as an example of the sentimental, romantic, mellow, linear narrative production that the protagonists of the avant-garde aimed to attack, destroy, and replace with their own artistic proposals. Moreover, the manifesto contained deliberately personal attacks, to Dantas and others, including the painter Alberto Sousa ("the Dantas of drawing"), José de Figueiredo, then director of the National Museum of Art, and even Alfredo Guisado — the Orpheu companion who by then had distanced himself from the project on account of his support for the Republican Afonso Costa.[31]

[31] Sara Afonso Ferreira has identified every name mentioned in the manifesto (Ferreira, 2013: 19-90).

The *Manifesto Anti-Dantas* is a personalised attack on the old culture, on the academy and on bourgeois taste, but it does not express directly the rebirth and regeneration topic that can be found in other futurist manifestos. On the other hand, it expresses the rejection of national backwardness in the face of European civilisational models by classifying the country as "MOST BACKWARD COUNTRY IN EUROPE AND THE WORLD! THE MOST SAVAGE COUNTRY OF ALL THE AFRICAS! THE COUNTRY OF CONVICTS AND INDENTURED LABOURERS! THE RECLUSIVE AFRICA OF THE EUROPEANS!". This kind of self-deprecatory national appreciation has antecedents that go back to the eighteenth-century. The concept of belatedness, associated with being 'savage' or 'primitive', was not only applied to colonised countries, but it is part of a certain kind Portuguese intellectual discourse nostalgic of past original glories that criticised the country by describing it as 'African', that is, out of Europe. 'Primitive' here has a negative sense, and the prejudice implied in the comparison shows the colonialist desire of being at pace with European empires. It therefore associates the criticism of lack of modernity with the desire of recovering imperial influence amongst Europe's most powerful countries (Pinto dos Santos, 2019: 37-64). In the futurist manifestos, this meant, as found in Campos' *Ultimatum*, to associate aesthetic renewal with becoming Europe's peer, but the language used in different occasions balances contradictorily between the refusal of civilisation by going back to a 'primitive' origin, and the praise of European modern (imperial) civilisation.

This was also expressed in a 1916 questionnaire conducted in a Lisbon newspaper with the title "What custome would I like to wear and in which era to live". It was a Carnival joke, and they asked the opinion of the 23-year-old Almada Negreiros, who answered: "If only I could be born in the year 2000. I hate the banality of contemporary life, with its immutability, its regular clockwork mechanics, which deprives the spirit of being able to fly, of rising to its true ether, which deprives it of Originality, Individuation, Egotism, Unicism, and makes my face, your face, the face of that one look like everyone else's face. It is horrible. It is the phase of the imposing and commanding Mediocrity... That is why I abhor Civilisation. I wish I could fall like a barbarian upon Byzantium and tear it to pieces, plunder its riches, set fire to it — Nero! Nero! burning Rome, you were a barbarian too, oh, my brother! — and thus begin the victorious cycle of Futurism in the world. What I would give, my friend, to live in the year 2000!"[32]

[32] The interview was found in an unidentified newspaper clip in Almada's estate at CEDANSA, NOVA FCSH.

In this short frivolous interview, Almada says that civilisation does not acknowledge difference, it makes everyone look the same, and individuality can only be retrieved with barbaric destruction. He is sure that by the year 2000 that destruction has taken place. This is a performative statement which projects, tautologically, in a distant future the concretisation of futurism, thus affirming that its protagonists, including himself, belong to an age to come, and not to 1916. That age is the age of a new empire, as the reference to the burning of Rome makes clear, but it is also a projected unattainable — or unverifiable — future.

The second of Almada's manifestos was a 'positive' one in praise of the painter Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso (1887-1918), written and distributed on occasion of his polemic Lisbon's exhibition in December 1916 where he showed avant-garde post-cubist paintings. It was later included inside the edition of Almada's futurist short story *K4 O Quadrado Azul*, for which Amadeo supervised the printing in Porto. This manifesto disdained the traditionalists, naming, again, José de Figueiredo, while seeking to inaugurate a new taste by force, represented by Amadeo's painting, which embodied the rejection of naturalism and symbolism that the avant-garde artists proclaimed.

Almada urges the public not to miss the exhibition with his lapidary formulations and an enthusiastic affirmation that Amadeo was indispensable for the twentieth century to happen. A stimulus for the formation of an audience for Amadeo's exhibition, this document also aimed to prepare for the avant-garde proposals of Almada himself, who wrote in the first-person plural, declaring that art for the twentieth century must be an "Experience" of modernity: "We futurists don't know History, we only know the Life that passes through Us."

This too is a Nietzschean echo, that can be traced to the *Second Untimely Consideration – On the use and abuse of history for life* (1874) and its attack on History that the philosopher considered completely separated from the experience of life. Celebrating experience instead of history is another way of rejecting the past, while embracing the present, by focusing on the "here and now" of direct experience, on the constant stimulus of senses freed from rational, historical, civilised reflection. However, this too is put into perspective by, again, a reference to the so-called "discoveries" age. Almada affirms that the Exhibition of Amadeo is "the concise document of the Portuguese Race in the Twentieth Century". Furthermore, he states that: "The Portuguese Race does not need rehabilitation as unprepared traditionalists pretend to think; it needs to be born to the century

Earth lives on. The Maritime Discovery of the Route to Índia does not belong to us because we did not participate in that deed physically and that event belongs much more to the Fifteenth Century than to Portugal."

In Almada's text, the regeneration that 'rebirth' provides is as much for the individual as for, or even more, the nation. According to the manifesto, there is nothing more to expect from history: what is from the fifteenth century must remain in the fifteenth century and it is necessary to experience the twentieth century. That is why Almada refers to Amadeo, in bold letters, as "the first Discovery of Portugal in Europe in the Twentieth century"[33].

Almada materialises in an artist and his work what it means to aesthetically re-found Portugal and declares plainly "the Discovery of the Maritime Route to India is less important than Amadeo". This manifesto confirms that the Portuguese futurist project intertwines aesthetics and politics: political regeneration goes hand in hand with, and depends on, aesthetic regeneration. The futurist gesture of propagandising the erasure of the culture of the past is expressed, in the Portuguese case, in the proclamation that the historical past glorified in nationalist discourses like the "discovery of India" (and that Salazar's dictatorship would come to exacerbate) must be replaced by what makes sense in the present and that is to live intensely and aesthetically. Moreover, Amadeo is a discovery "in Europe", not outside of it — that is, Almada is keen to affirm that Portugal is aesthetically fully 'at pace' with modern present (Eurocentric) time.

This exhortation and appeal to the public to "educate itself", and to participate in this "rebirth" is what is also at stake in the manifesto for the Ballets Russes that Almada writes, prints and distributes in November 1917, when Diaghilev's company arrives in Portugal and stays for four months, due to the ongoing war.[34]

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[33] These words have affinity with an unpublished note by Fernando Pessoa meant for advertising *Orpheu* n. 3: "Today, this magazine is the only bridge between Portugal and Europe, and even the only major reason Portugal has for existing as an independent nation. / Reading ORPHEU is the only civilised act that can be practised in Portugal today, except for suicide with an incineration order in one's will. / To buy ORPHEU is to return from Africa. To understand ORPHEU is to have returned from Africa a long time ago." (Pessoa, 1993: 126).

[34] The manifesto was included, as a separate sheet of paper, in the magazine *Portugal Futurista* that came out in November 1917. Although that version was signed also by composer Ruy Coelho and architect José Pacheko, it is documented that Almada was the only author. There is a previous version of the document in Almada Negreiros' estate that shows only his signature, which confirms his affirmation that he was the single author of the manifesto, as he told a newspaper in 1925. "Almada responde à carta de Ruy Coelho" in *Diário de Lisboa*, 4 May 1925, 2.

Almada exhorts the public to "give itself to European Civilisation", to self-regenerate by embracing the Ballets Russes, that dispense with any kind of previous education to be understood. "The Russian ballets have a happy understanding of modern Art", he states and when he lists its characteristics, he chooses among other words the terms "spontaneous", "infantile", and "naïve". In fact, in the Ballets Russes there was a combination of sophistication and the search for a primeval language in folk art: "As soon as it premiered in Paris, Diaghilev's company immediately conquered the Western elite's affection, mainly because it conciliated the radically innovative nature of its artistic project with a primitivist evocation of the motifs present in Russian folk art." (Alves, 2024: 167).

It is relevant to notice that some of the poetic experimentations of Almada in the context of Futurism at that same period were incorporating folk rhymes from the oral tradition, such as in the erotic poem "Mima-Fataxa Sinfonia Cosmopolita e Apologia do Triângulo Feminino" [Mima-Fataxa Cosmopolitan Synphony and Apology for the Female Triangle] published in *Portugal Futurista*. One of its verses reads "5: MARIA DOS BRINCOS" which is a nursery rhyme for children to learn how to count. The poem "Litoral", dedicated to Amadeo and printed as a pamphlet too, to be distributed in 1916 the year of both his exhibitions, in Porto and Lisbon, has several references to pottery, "chita" (a traditional Portuguese fabric), religious folk prayers ("Sinhora do Livramento"), or exotic references such as "restos de sarracenos" [saracen traces] and "Astrakan maltês de misticismo bárbaro" [Maltese Astrakan of barbaric mysticism]. And one of its verses is also a folk proverb: "a chover e a fazer Sol estão-se as bruxas a pentear" [rain and sunshine, the witches are combing their hair]. Thus, the idea of regeneration within futurism expresses itself also in this childish or naïve trope of primitivism, in the sense that there is a primeval way of learning, as if for the first time.[35]

The point is that the Portuguese futurists needed to re-found their own national historical discourse and that is why the idea of "discovery" is strong: according to these texts, the world must be rediscovered as if for the first time in order to reconfigure the supposed glory of past times in an aesthetic intervention in modern Europe.

[35] "Far from requiring a colonial other, modernists could as easily accommodate rural and urban peasants to primitivist categories of authenticity and outsiderhood, looking to folk art of the rural peasantry or popular art of the urban working class to lend greater authenticity to their own expressions of artistic and social criticism." (Antliff and Leighten, 2003: 230).

Finally, the other 'negative' futurist manifesto by Almada was actually the third to be written and it was presented in a Futurist Conference that took place on April 14th 1917 at Theatro Republica in Lisbon (after 1918 it took the name of its patron, Teatro São Luiz).[36] In that conference there were readings of other futurist manifestos, namely *Tuons le Clair de la Lune* (1911) and *Le Music-Hall* (1913) by Marinetti and the *Futurist Manifesto of Lust* (1913) by Valentine Saint Point which was read right after Almada's *Ultimatum Futurista às Gerações Portuguesas do Século XX* [Futurist Ultimatum to the 20th Century Portuguese Generations]. Again, the word "Ultimatum" in the title is relevant as a reprise of the trauma of the British 1890 Ultimatum that threatened the Portuguese colonial possessions in Africa. It is a deliberate provocation as if to trigger yet another trauma, one that would allowed to surpass the political trauma with aesthetic rupture and innovation. This manifesto was also published in the magazine *Portugal Futurista*, meaning that two texts in it had "Ultimatum" in their title: Campos' and Almada's. This means that they were actually impersonating the role of the Bristish by presenting two Ultimatums in order to Portugal renew itself according to the demands of European modernity and not its past idea of empire.

The publication in *Portugal Futurista* is preceded by a description signed by Almada, next to his famous photograph in overalls, a comic Chaplinesque costume[37] in which he acknowledges his "inspiration in Marinetti" and affirms the "genius optimism of his youth". The self-regeneration topic is evident: Almada presents himself as the "conscient result of his own experience" exhibiting his youth "I am 22 years of health and intelligence". He wants to transform his country in order Portugal can be worthy of himself. That means the nation had to be at pace with the futurist artist, and that's when politics enter the scene. Immediately in the first paragraphs of the manifesto a direct reference to the

[36] Günter Berghaus has mentioned how this conference was inspired in the Italian futurist serate, which often took place in theatres and had a strong political charge that led Marinetti to call them *comizio artistico*. The Futurism scholar tries to demonstrate how the Portuguese conference fell short of the ones made by the Italian futurists, by failing to attract large audiences and media reception, and showing a weak programme and planning which Berghaus speculates being largely circumstantial and improvised, implying the lack of proper understanding usually attributed to the periphery, seeing it as limited to the emulation of an exemplary centre (Berghaus, 2017: 23-37).

[37] Sascha Bru has, I believe correctly, described Almada's costume as a reference to Charles Chaplin's baggy pants in *The Tramp* (1915) contradicting the usual reading of it as an aviator or factory worker outfit (Bru, 2018: 72). Almada was a huge admirer of Chaplin, as testified by several mentions in his writings, namely the 1921 article called "Charlie Chaplin" (*Diário de Lisboa*, 11 May 1921, 3).

republican regime comes about — and we must take into account the Ultimatum was read in a theatre called Republica after the end of the monarchy in 1910 (before that, the theatre was named after Queen Amélia).

PORTUGAL FUTURISTA 35

1a CONFERENCIA FUTURISTA

DE

José de ALMADA-NEGREIROS

Compte-Rendu pelo Conferente

TEATRO REPUBLICA

SABADO, 14 DE ABRIL DE 1917 Ás 5 h. tarde (17 h.)

CONFERENCIA

FUTURISTA

POR

José de ALMADA-NEGREIROS

1a PARTE — ULTIMATUM FUTURISTA ÁS GERAÇÕES PORTUGUEZAS DO SECULO XX, POR

José de ALMADA-NEGREIROS

2a PARTE — MANIFESTO FUTURISTA DA LUXÚRIA, POR

Mme de SAINT-POINT

3a PARTE — MUSIC-HALL

ET

TUONS LE CLAIR DE LUNE! DE

MARINETTI

ENTRADA 52 CTS.

Á minha entrada no palco rebentou uma expontanea e tremenda pateada seguida de uma calorosissima salva de palmas que eu cortei de um gesto.

Reduzida a plateia á sua inexpressão natural tive a gloria de apresentar o futurista Santa-Rita-Pintor que o publico recebeu com uma ovação unanime.

Comecei então o meu ultimatum á juventude portugueza do seculo XX e a plateia costumada a conferencias exclusivamente litterarias e pedantes chocou-se nitidamente com a virilidade das minhas afirmações pelo que executava premeditadas e cobardes reprovações isoladas mas sem efeito de conjunto.

Tendo sido concedido á plateia, segundo a orientação futurista, interromper o conferente, todas as contradições foram visivelmente ineficazes a não ser no que dizia respeito á incompetencia dos contraditores.

Os chefes politicos presentes, quando as nossas afirmações futuristas pareciam estar de accordo com as suas restricções monarchicas ou republicanas apoiavam sumidamente com um muito bem parlamentar, mas se a nossa ideia lhes era evidentemente rival o seu unico recurso resumia-se na gargalhada, symbolo sonoro da imbecilidade.

Consegui, inspirado na revelação de Marinetti e apoiado no genial optimismo da minha juventude, transpor esta bitola de insipidez em que se gasta Lisboa inteira, e atingir ante a curiosidade da plateia a expressão da intensidade da vida moderna, sem duvida de todas as revelações a que é mais distante de Portugal.

Em seguida a minha conferencia irá dizer as minhas razões expostas no teatro Republica no sabado 14 de Abril de 1917, data da tumultuosa apresentação do Futurismo ao povo portuguez.

Lisboa, Maio de 1917.

José de ALMADA-NEGREIROS

O poeta futurista José de ALMADA-NEGREIROS violentamente pateado á sua entrada no palco do Theatro Republica. Sabado, 14 de Abril de 1917.

Fig. 4. Almada in the costume he wore for the Futurist Conference at Theatro Republica in Lisbon, and the description of the Conference next to it. *Portugal Futurista*, 1917.

Almada says that the republic only proves the decadence of "the race" and that it has no creative power. A new nation must be created with no consideration for the preceding: "We need to create the Portuguese homeland for the Twentieth Century!"[38] is the motto repeated throughout the manifesto. And that can only be achieved by creating one's own experience namely, in war. Almada dedicates more than a dozen paragraphs praising war, including saying that all Europe is concentrated in the front, and therefore, all civilisation is fighting the war. His praise of war as something that can renew humanity and "wake up the creative and constructive spirit", in which men can reawaken their primordial instinct, is a direct emulation of Marinetti's idea of war as "hygiene". However, it is relevant to notice that in Almada the praise of war comes right after the criticism of the republicans, who were the ones defending the participation of Portugal in the Great War. The way he puts it could be read as taking advantage

[38] Pessoa's theoretical endeavour also aims at reimagining the Portuguese homeland for the twentieth century (Russo, 2024: 37).

of the war promoted by Afonso Costa to instead annihilate the traditional historical values, the values of sentimentalism and "saudade" (an untranslatable Portuguese word which significance is close to nostalgia) that he associates with the republican regime and to replace them by "modern heroism".

By then Portugal had been sending soldiers to France since the beginning of January but they only got to the front in early April. However, the defence of the colonies in Africa, Angola and Mozambique, which were contiguous to Germany's colonies, had military contingents since September 1914 comprising Portuguese and indigenous soldiers. The death toll of Portuguese soldiers in Africa ascended to over 5500 men, much higher than in Europe (Afonso, 2021: 297).[39] One of the soldiers sent to the French front in January 1917 was Almada's brother, António Almada Negreiros, who had a military career. In a brief letter to Amadeo dated from January 4th 1917 Almada writes about the costs of having printed his poem "Litoral", about his short story *K4 O Quadrado Azul* that was being printed up north, and he mentions that, despite recovering from recent surgery his "pain, now, has a different direction. My brother, whom is who I admire most, is already departing for France".[40] The literary scholar Manuela Parreira da Silva, analysing war in Portuguese modernisms, has mentioned how this letter shows Almada's real worries about the war and commented that the praise for war in Almada's *Ultimatum* was a metaphor for the praise for revolution (Parreira da Silva, 2023: 210-211).[41]

This reading complies with what Renato Poggioli wrote about Futurism in *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*: "The futurist manifestation represents, so to speak, a prophetic and utopian phase, the arena of agitation and preparation for the announced revolution, if not the revolution itself." (Poggioli apud Perloff, 1986: xvii). And indeed, the futurist praise for technology and industry associated with the urge for new forms of art, philosophy and language was seen by Antonio Gramsci as Marxist at heart.[42] The idea of a libertarian technology that allows to refound aesthetics has in fact Marxist resonances but, as Gramsci later criticised, Italian Futurism was tainted by the praise of war as the "world's only hygiene".

[39] Afonso: "Portugal e a guerra nas colónias", 297.

[40] Almada Negreiros, letter to Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso. Estate Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso. Gulbenkian Library and Art Archives, Lisbon.

[41] Eiras has also noted Almada's contradiction between the criticism of war in *A Cena do Ódio* and the praising of war in the *Ultimatum Futurista às Gerações Portuguesas do Século XX*. (Eiras, 2015: 314).

[42] Gramsci: "Marinetti revoluzionario?" (1921), apud Perloff, 1986: 2.

The "cleanliness" or "hygiene" metaphor is present in the Portuguese manifestos associated with regeneration and rebirth, but not as much as war. The *Manifesto Anti-Dantas* ends stating "A NECESSIDADE DE PORTUGAL SER QUALQUER COISA DE ASSEADO!" [THE NEED FOR PORTUGAL TO BE SOMETHING CLEAN!] and Álvaro de Campos' *Ultimatum* expresses a suffocation with the current philosophy, religion, art, literature, politics, the war, and proclaims the need to get rid of them and to "breathe", shouting to "open all the windows, even more windows than those that exist in the world!". Moreover, Campos' further states "Attach a locomotive to that war!", which indicates not so much a praise for the war but a wish for it to end quickly, to perform all the destruction needed in order to restart all over.

I believe Almada's statement in his *Ultimatum* is something analogous: although not in favour of the specific war that was taking place, it says that, since it has started, let it destroy the republican regime, as one of the phrases in his *Ultimatum* shows: "It is necessary to explain to our people what democracy is, so they won't fall in temptation again." It is, nevertheless, a contradictory manifest: its debt to Marinetti's futurism forces Almada to praise war as a metaphor to join "European Civilisation", but he cannot but mention the real war, considering Portugal was participating in it at that precise moment. The decision to participate in the war was enabled by a political coup that the *Orpheu* protagonists had fiercely opposed.[43] This contradiction could only be resolved through parody.

3. FINAL REMARKS — PANDEMONIUM AND REVOLUTION: PORTUGUESE FUTURISM STUCK IN AN ETERNAL BEGINNING

The Portuguese futurist manifestos are very much involved with national and international politics, as their Italian counterparts. They deliberately promoted aesthetic revolution interconnected with political revolution, paradoxically rejecting democracy and encouraging what may be described as an aesthetic aristocracy, but in a vague, undetermined way.

It is worth noting that the rejection of democracy had to do with the constant political, economic, and social instability of the early stages of the republican regime in Portugal (between 1910 and 1918 there were dozens of governments, some of them

[43] In Almada's short story *A Engomadeira*, published in 1917, the narrator is presented as quite indifferent regarding the ongoing war, not pro-Allies and in fact much more pro-German (I analyse this matter in a forthcoming essay, "Interseccionismo e política em A Engomadeira de Almada Negreiros").

lasting only a few days). It encompassed several attempts of dictatorial coups, some of them successful, even if brief, and a political militia, that imprisoned, beat up and murdered opponents. Nevertheless, there was a substantial difference towards Italian futurists regarding their position on war. The Portuguese manifestos have "violence and precision", and a literary performativity that has characteristics of its own, by dealing with the nationalist uses of the past by the republican regime that they contested and wanted to see annihilated. And they are "contextual and performative", meaning they operate within a historical context and a horizon of expected impact and reaction (Foster, 1996: 15-16). The primitivist trope of returning to a primordial origin is expressed in most of them and is also present in poetic texts produced side by side the manifestos.

In his criticism of Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Hal Foster notes that "he misses its mimetic dimension, whereby the avant-garde mimes the degraded world of capitalist modernity in order not to embrace it but to mock it. [...] He also misses its utopian dimension, whereby the avant-garde proposes not what it can be so much as what cannot be." (Foster, 1996: 16). Besides this utopian, undefined future, it is the mocking character that I believe is very much present in the Portuguese manifestos, most notably in the two *Ultimatums* by Campos and Almada, which curiously are the ones that emulate more closely the futurist manifesto formulas. Namely, those manifestos are the only ones presenting enumeration, one of the most recognizable characteristics of the manifesto artistic genre. Therefore, when the manifestos look more like the Italian ones and use their formulas, they are so because they work as parody.

The possibility of directing humour towards Futurism itself is in a way more relaxed by the peripheral distance of Portuguese avant-garde from its international counterparts and it signals how interpretations of Futurism depended on local contexts and necessarily diversified its ways of meaning. In the case of Almada's futurist conference, this is confirmed by an advertisement for a second conference that Almada publishes in the newspaper shortly after his performance at Theatro Republica. After ironically thanking the public and the press for the "extraordinary success" of his first conference, he announces he will present the second part of it as a "comdia futurista" [futurist comedy] which will help "our urgent mission to make our Portugal young and joyful".[44]

[44] Letter from Almada Negreiros "A nova ideia: Futurismo. Vae realisar-se brevemente em Lisboa um espectáculo futurista", *A Capital*, 20 April 1917.

Hence, there is a mocking character in the Portuguese manifestos, especially vivid in the *Ultimatums*, that must be taken into consideration when interpreting Almada's praise for war in his *Ultimatum Futurista*.[45] The rudeness and humour in texts like *A Cena do Ódio*, *Manifesto Anti-Dantas* and both *Ultimatums* is sometimes expressed with racial prejudice against black and Romani people. Although racism and the subalternisation of other people was structural and not questioned, recurring to such biased jargon guaranteed easy laughs.

Almada's manifestos insolence have a particular and deliberate childish expression — what is the typographic hand in the *Manifesto Anti-Dantas* if not a toy revolver, like the ones children make up with their hands when they play cowboys? The return to infancy, also a primitivist trope, means to have no filters and a free playfulness regarding serious topics, like war. Crossing it with Diogenes' cynicism and his rejection of civilised society, or, yet, with the Nietszchean return to childhood in his Zarathustra[46] (also mentioned by Almada in *A Cena do Ódio*), which means to philosophize from ground zero, to discover the world as if for the first time, this results in an explosive mixture to comment aesthetically on present politics.

The libertarian notion of "Revolution" implicated in Futurism, should regard the word's etymology. As Enzo Traverso recalls, it comes from the Latin "*revolutio*, *revolvere*: returning to the origins. It means a kind of rotation by which something goes back to its starting point." (Traverso, 2021). It is to interrupt the course of time, and to irrupt in it the Nietzschean *untimely*. That means that even though Futurism is based on the belief in history as evolutionary progress, its revolutionary character means to insert a rupture in that timeline. Despite its final aim being to accelerate into a utopian future, it gets stuck in a constant now. This now can be seen as the now of infancy, of playing.

In his text "In Playland. Reflections on history and play", Giorgio Agamben evokes the story written by Carlo Collodi in 1881 about Pinocchio, who arrives in Playland where nothing is

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Although Günter Berghaus quotes this letter, it is only to mark the lack of continuity of Portuguese Futurism, and he does not acknowledge the "comedy" element mentioned in it (Berghaus, 2017: 31).

[45] The way he presented it, with staged interruptions by Santa Rita and showing the backstage to the audience is well documented (Almada Negreiros, 2016b: 71-78); and about Almada, futurism and humour, see Pinto dos Santos, 2024.

[46] Pedro Eiras and Manuela Parreira da Silva have also referred to the Nietzschean return to childhood and its importance to Almada (Eiras, 2017: 300; Parreira da Silva, 2023: 213). See also Pinto dos Santos, 2025.

done other than play. Agamben writes about how the permanent state of holiday that is lived there corresponds to a destruction of the calendar. Stopping the calendar is simultaneously an acceleration of time, since every day becomes a holiday. A "pandemonium" is installed in Playland in which no conventional rules work and the children's play tears history to pieces (Agamben, 2007 (1987): 74-96). The regeneration brought by rebirth, and the return to a timeless realm where childish behaviour is possible — where they can be like brats shaking the established political and aesthetic order — that is the primitivist trope most present in Portuguese futurist texts.

Note: All translations are mine unless otherwise stated. In order not to overload the text with footnotes, only a few of the Portuguese originals are cited.

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PRIMITIVE ALMERÍA IN THE 1940S: TURNING REBELLIOUS TROGLODYTES INTO A PICTURESQUE PEOPLE[1]

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, we analyse how the prism of primitivism was used in officially-sanctioned textual and visual discourses produced in the 1940s referring to cave-dwellings in Almería (Southern Spain). To do this, we focus on two case studies: two official reports issued in the early 1940s, and the *Indaliano* artistic movement officially presented in 1946.

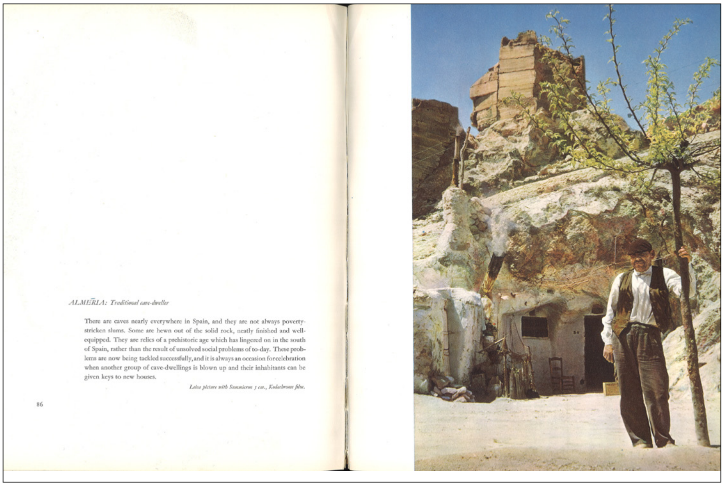
We argue that, despite the apparent differences in their views on primitivism, these initiatives can be considered as interlocked stages of a single process: that of transforming the primitive-as-a-threatening-degenerated-individual into the primitive-as-a-picturesque-popular/folk-figure. Outlining ideas related to primitiveness, the images of Almería cave-dwellings conveyed by the reports and by the *Indaliano* movement reached a common twofold objective: to draw the attention of the capital, Madrid, toward the city and the province of Almería (i.e. the periphery), and to use art and aesthetics as a means (indeed as powerful technologies) to impose the order of the dictatorial regime established after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) on the subjects and territories they described as primitive, thus defusing any political challenge they might pose.

1 This chapter is the result of Noemí de Haro García's work in the framework of the project *Iberian Modernisms and the Primitivist imaginary* (PTDC/ART-HIS/29837/2017) and of both authors' work in the project PÚBLICOS (PID2019-105800GB-I00 MICIN/AEI).

> There are caves nearly everywhere in Spain, and they are not always poverty-stricken slums. Some are hewn out of the solid rock, neatly finished and well-equipped. They are relics of a prehistoric age which has lingered on in the south of Spain, rather than the result of unsolved social problems of today. These problems are now being tackled successfully, and it is always an occasion for celebration when another group of cave-dwellings is blown up and their inhabitants can be given keys to new houses (Boger and Dieterich, 1958: 86).

So reads the caption of a colour photograph published in the tourist guide *Portrait of Spain*[2] (fig. 1). It shows a man posing at the door of the cave that was his home in Almería in the early 1950s: a "[t]raditional cave-dweller." He is, thus, presented as the prototype of a person who has decided to live in what the text describes as a "relic of the prehistoric age." The caption stresses that his home is a well-built and well-equipped cave, not a slum. The man's features speak of the harshness of his life, of physical work under the burning sun. The different shades of brown of his cap, waistcoat and worn-out trousers contrast with an immaculate white shirt. In the foreground, a tree with its branches filled with sprouting green leaves makes the rocky mountains and the whitewashed entrance to the cave appear more welcoming and friendly. In sum, the image appears to be an idyllic portrayal of manual labour, humble decency and tradition. The negative connotations of poverty and exclusion are muffled, if present at all. Indeed, as Alicia Fuentes has noted, both the photo and the text provide an optimistic vision of life in the caves, devoid of conflict (Fuentes, 2017: 208). This is presented just as a typical custom of Almería, a distinct characteristic of Spain, where Prehistory lives on in the present. And it is affirmed this is something valuable, worthy of admiration and preservation, as a relic is. However, the text nevertheless refers to the destruction of some of these caves, to their inhabitants being given keys to new houses, and even mentions some "social problems" which are dealt with successfully. Might this paradoxical juxtaposition mean, then, that the cave-dwellings that are left, those that remain undestroyed, are only those that respond to such a typical custom, to a cultural difference?

[2] We have consulted the 1958 edition of this publication which first appeared in 1952.


ALMERIA: Traditional cave-dweller

There are caves nearly everywhere in Spain, and they are not always poverty-stricken slums. Some are hewn out of the solid rock, neatly finished and well-equipped. They are relics of a prehistoric age which has lingered on in the south of Spain, rather than the result of unsolved social problems of to-day. These problems are now being tackled successfully, and it is always an occasion for celebration when another group of cave-dwellings is blown up and their inhabitants can be given keys to new houses.

Leica picture with Summicron 5 cm., Kodachrome film.

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Fig. 1 "Almeria: Traditional cave-dweller" in Boger and Dieterich, 1958: 86-87.

As Fuentes explains, the visit to the caves in Almería was included in some of the numerous tourist circuits that brought millions of visitors to a country ruled by a dictator. The picturesque aesthetics of the landscape were highlighted in most travel guides; the authenticity of the experience was guaranteed to an audience of "adventure-seeking" tourists. Going to distant and alien Spain produced the impression of travelling back in time; however, this "primitivist pulsion" merely reinforced the traveller's feeling of (cultural and economic) superiority (Fuentes, 2017: 201, 211-12).[3]

The relationship between the cave-dwellings in Almería and notions that can be loosely connected to 'primitiveness,' however, should not be considered as an innovation introduced by the 1950s tourist industry. This industry was, in fact, mobilising ideas and images that were already in circulation in other countries as well as in cultural and artistic circles within Almería and Spain.

In this chapter, we analyse how the prism of primitivism was used in officially-sanctioned textual and visual discourses produced in the 1940s referring to cave-dwellings in Almería. We focus on two case studies: two official reports produced in the early 1940s to justify the need for destroying the caves and "civilising" their inhabitants, and the *Indaliano* artistic movement, officially presented in Almería in 1946 and in Madrid in 1947, that proudly vindicated Almería's primitivism. It is important to note

[3] There are evident resonances between this situation and that of the travellers who were thrilled to get the authentic experience of an orientalised Spain filled with bandits in the 19th century.

that both discourses were produced in Almería itself, involving key figures of the post-war politics and intellectual life, at the local and national levels.

We argue that, despite the apparent differences in their views on primitivism, these two initiatives can be considered as complementary and, indeed, as interlocked stages of the same process. This was the process of transforming the primitive-as-a-threatening-degeneratede-individual into the primitive-as-a-picturesque-popular/folk-figure. Outlining ideas related to primitiveness, the images of Almería cave-dwellings conveyed by the reports and by the *Indaliano* movement reached a common twofold objective: to draw the attention of the capital, Madrid, toward the city and the province of Almería (i.e. the periphery), and to use art and aesthetics as a means (indeed as powerful technologies) to impose the order of the "New Spain" — as it was called — established after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) on the subjects and territories they described as primitive, thus defusing any political challenge they might pose to the dictatorial regime on power.

TROGLODYTIC AND INHUMAN

Almería is a province of Andalucía, in South-Eastern Spain. Close to the Málaga and Granada fronts during the Spanish Civil War, it suffered more than 50 air raids. In February 1937, reaching Almería was the goal of thousands of civilians fleeing the Francoist troops as they arrived at the republican city of Málaga. The Málaga-Almería road massacre by the Francoist army and its supporters (known in Spanish as *la desbandá*) is sadly among the bloodiest events of the war. It is said that some of the survivors of the massacre ended up living in caves in Almería as they found no other place to stay. Indeed, some investigations note that, after the war, the population of cave dwellers grew dramatically, with 25000 new residents (Cachorro, 2016: 8-14).

In 1941, the Civil Governor of Almería and Provincial Chief of *Falange*,[4] Rodrigo Vivar Téllez, promoted the drafting of a situation report on the inhabited caves excavated in the hills surrounding the city. This document was sent to the Ministry of Governance in Madrid in order to ask the *Caudillo*,[5] Francisco

[4] '*Falange*' is the short way to refer to the regime's sole (and fascist) political party, whose full name was *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (FET-JONS).*

[5] The term '*Caudillo*' was one of the ways to refer to the dictator Franco. It refers to a charismatic military leader. Establishing a connection with the

Franco, to adopt Almería. The adoption of a place by the dictator was the formula put forward by the regime to promote construction and reconstruction works in places that had endured "maximum collective devastation" and were in need of the "urban and social improvements required by the guiding principles of the regime" ("Decreto de 23 de septiembre de 1939..."). [6] Being granted the Decree of Adoption by the Ministry of Governance meant the appropriation of substantial funds that were to be managed by the local authorities.

The first report was entitled "Report on the situation of the cave-dwellings in Almería" and was dated September 16th 1941 ("Informe sobre la situación...," 1941). In 1943, a second version of the report was prepared with the title "Caves in Almería" ("Cuevas de Almería," 1943). The 1941 report is a rustic book with 134 pages of a standard A4 size. Its hardcover binding is of the distinct blue colour of *Falange* (Mahon blue). A seven-page memoir by the Provincial Delegate of *Falange* in Almería is the prelude to 124 photographs of the people living in these caves. [7] In most cases, there is one photograph per page, each accompanied by a short typed caption. The closing section of the 1941 report comprises a four-page text by the provincial health authority, Juan José Giménez Canga-Argüelles, [8] discussing the contagious diseases proliferating in the caves and stressing the risks this posed to public health.

In contrast to its humble predecessor, the 1943 report boasts an impeccable design. It is an excellent example of *Falange*'s aesthetics. Each of its A5 pages, made of robust Mahon-blue card, features the report title and the *Falange* emblem: the yoke and arrows. This edition opens with a brief one-page text that, tellingly, warns that the situation of extreme poverty in the caves may lead to "rebellion." We could say that, in this new version of the report, most of the argumentative and persuasive power and responsibility rely on its visual impact, that is, on the photographs and the comments of their captions. As both reports

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medieval past which legitimised and provided a centuries-old genealogy for the dictatorship, one could say it was the Spanish version of contemporary terms like '*Führer*' in Nazi Germany and '*Duce*' in Fascist Italy.

[6] Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Spanish are the authors'.

[7] These reports have been analysed in depth by Mar Alberruche in her research on the visual construction of poverty in early francoism (Alberruche, 2021).

[8] The signatures of the texts in the report refer only to the political position of its author, without mentioning his name. We have matched each post with the person appointed to it.

featured the same photographs, even if some images are missing from the 1943 report conserved in the archive, we can reconstruct its appearance. Since only a couple of years separate the two reports, their photographs are the same and, in general, so are their arguments, we analyse the texts and images of both reports jointly.

According to the text by the *Falange*'s Provincial Delegate, the photos were taken by "comrade Luis Guerry," a reputed local photographer. He was accompanied by at least two members of *Falange*. According to the Provincial Delegate, the photos were not prepared, nor staged: people were taken by surprise, either in the evening, when families were going back home after their activities or early in the morning, when cave-dwellers were "sleeping their misery away."[9] The images were thus presented as truthfully capturing the state of life and people in the caves, avoiding "literary and artistic clichés" ("Informe sobre la situación...," 1941: unpaginated).

Apparently, the texts in the report refer explicitly to the (political) ideas of cave-dwellers only in a few instances. However, as we will see, the analogies, images and arguments used throughout the document belong to a specific line of thought that aimed at exercising political, social and medical power. For instance, the photograph of a child in front of the entrance to one of the caves is accompanied by this comment: "and so this is how thousands of people live in Almería, dreaming of a better distribution of wealth having been, in another time, incubators of the unbridled and murderous communist germ,"[10] The allusion to the "dream of a better distribution of wealth" in connection with the statement that, in the (near) past, these people were incubators of the "communist germ" places those living in the caves on the defeated and demonised republican side of the Spanish Civil War. The child crawling on the ground near the caves is photographed from an upstanding position, which makes it look like a small animal. On this page of the report, therefore, specific (i.e. communist) political ideas, crime and a non-human, animal state, are all tied together. This is portrayed as a potential threat to the consolidation of Franco's New Spain in this region (fig. 2).

[9] The texts in Spanish read: "a la caida [sic] de la tarde, cuando la familia se recoge de sus múltiples actividades" and "aprovechando las horas primeras de la mañana en que la población viviente de las cuevas, dormía su miseria". Before that, it was stated that the report presented "de forma clara y huyendo de tópicos literarios y artísticos la verdad escueta."

[10] "Así viven en Almeria [sic] miles de personas que sueñan con una mejor distribución de la riqueza y que en otro tiempo fueron incubadoras del germen comunista, desbordado y asesino."

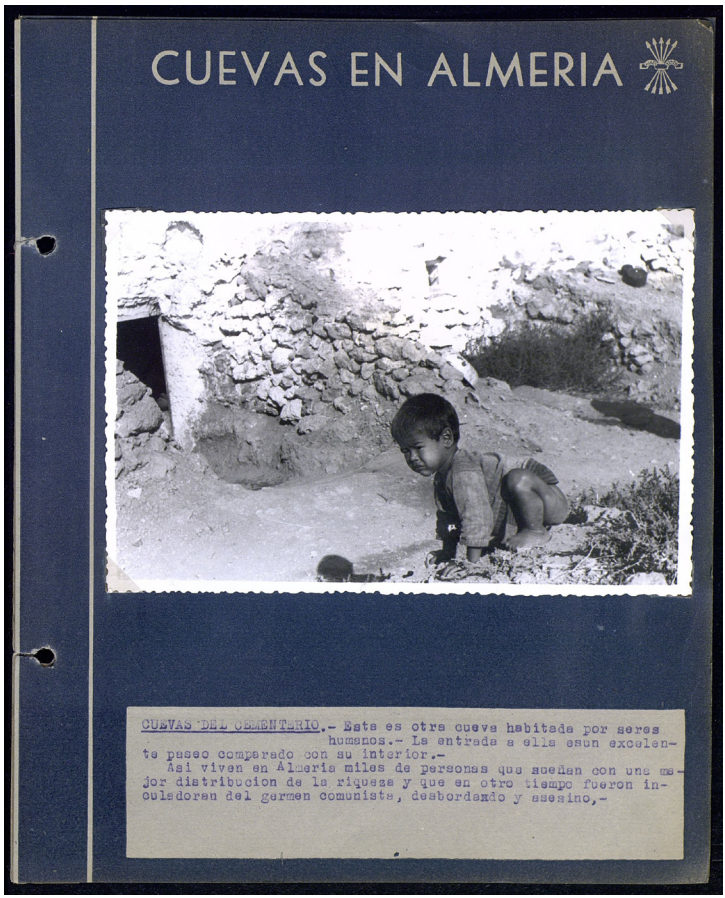

Fig. 2 "CUEVAS DEL CEMENTERIO" in "Cuevas de Almería," 1943, unpaginated. España, Ministerio de Cultura. Archivo General de la Administración. (4)82 F/4174, envelope 1.

Indeed, the reports constantly resort to images related to the animal world to refer to the caves and their living conditions. For example, they are described as "dens" and "rabbit hutches". Furthermore, they are even considered "unfit for beasts," as "troglodytic and inhuman" ("Cuevas de Almería", 1943: unpaginated). The latter image evokes the image of the uncivilised (not even/yet human) primitive beings.

In his text for the report, Giménez Canga-Argüelles, the health authority for Almería, stated that the caves were already densely populated at the beginning of the war. Then, the hills around Almería were riddled with caves; according to Giménez Canga-Argüelles, "human people [sic] emerged from any rock,

they were in an almost savage state, like the inhabitants of a warren, offering the image of *morisco* Kabyles in perfect harmony with the configuration of the landscape and the legend of the Moor and uncivilised Almería"[11] ("Informe sobre la situación...," 1941: unpaginated). Here, further layers of the official approach to the caves are revealed. Cavepeople were uncivilised, savage and animal-like. The only human group they might bear a relationship with was rooted in the past, namely, in the times of the *Reconquista*, it was also related with Islam and Africa.[12]

In a non-explicit way, the text seems to suggest that the persistence of this situation in the twentieth century was an anomaly that the Republican government and its supporters had been unable or unwilling to deal with, and which resulted in dramatic consequences. The lack of proper infrastructures, combined with the doubling of Almería's population during the war, forced even more people to use the caves as homes. These spaces also served as shelters during bombings. When the author describes half the population of this capital city of the "red Spain" resorting to them to shelter from air raids, he talks about "lairs"[13] people had to crawl into as if going through a "cat-door" ("Informe sobre la situación...," 1941, unpaginated). As we will see later, according to many Francoist authorities, experiences such as these may have brought people closer to the "red Spain."

The photograph captions resonate with some of the ideas expressed by Giménez Canga-Argüelles. This is the case of the text accompanying the image of a girl selecting grains of corn and preparing them to cook some sort of cornbread. It states that a similar procedure was used by the Moors in Africa, at a time when Spain was providing nourishment in the form of civilisation, Christianity and hope (the text does not specify to whom; it might be implied that Spain was such a provider for the whole world)[14] ("Informe

[11] "[D]e cualquier peñasco surgían personas humanas (sic), casi en estado de salvaje (sic), como habitantes de conejeras, ofreciendo el aspecto de cábilas moriscas en perfecta armonía con la configuración del paisaje y con la leyenda almeriense mora y sin civilizar."

[12] *Morisco* is the name given to Muslim people who had converted (willingly or not) when the Christian kingdoms defeated the Muslim ones in what was called the *Reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula in the 15th century. Although the text seems to use the term 'Moor' (*moro*) in a loose historical way, it inevitably resonates with its common use as a negative term to refer to people from North Africa, who are all deemed to be Muslim.

[13] The original in Spanish reads "*guarida*," a term which evoques the animal world but also that of people associated with bad behaviour, who are a threat to the existing order and who hide from it.

[14] "Igual procedimiento usaban los moros en África, en la época en que España llevaba alimentos de civilización y aires de cristianismo y esperanza."

sobre la situación...," 1941: unpaginated). In sum, cave-dwellers like this girl were depicted as belonging to a religious, geographical, and temporal "other," as they were Muslim, African, and were perceived as being stuck in the past. One could even surmise that, because of this, they lacked the food they needed.

In contrast, (the New) Spain is supposed to be about civilisation, hope, and Christianity. Both in the past and the present. Because Francoism claimed to be the current legitimate representative of Spain (its connection with Christianism guaranteed by the support of the Church), this text seems to suggest that, in present times, in what could be considered a new *Reconquista*, only the intervention of the newly established regime could help (and save) this girl who, otherwise, would remain hopelessly (and hungrily) uncivilised and alienated.

ILLNESSES OF THE BODY AND REBELLIOUSNESS OF THE SPIRIT

Through constant repetition, the report establishes a set of opposing concepts paramount to the process of othering by which the Francoist state classified and disciplined people, separating those who were to be identified with it from those who were not: human/animal, civilised/uncivilised, Christian/Muslim, Spain/Africa, present/past, progress(ion)/regression, plenty/scarcity, hope/despair, modern/primitive, New (Francoist) Spain/Red Spain. What was to be done with these others?

Sometimes, the reports refer to the people photographed with evident contempt and even sarcasm. In others, especially when describing children and some women, the tone is closer to patronising compassion. This results in ambivalent judgements and evidences cause-effect connections. Indeed, the viewer is left uncertain about the position of the official voice in the report. Sometimes, one has the impression that this voice considers that the caves' inhabitants make their homes there because they are closer to animals or savages than to civilised humans, hence their preferences. In other instances, the author seems to think (and laments) that, because they have ended up living in caves, these people are losing their human condition little by little.

This ambivalence is coherent, however, with what we consider the general framework under which the report was drafted: that of (Catholic) eugenics in Spain, the most active and important representative of which was Antonio Vallejo Nágera. He was already a renowned military psychiatrist by the 1930s. Evidence of his prominent position in the field through time is the fact

that, in 1950, he presided at the first international conference of Psychiatry in Paris. In 1918, he was assigned to the Military Commission of the Spanish Embassy in Berlin. There he met and was influenced by the work and ideas of German psychologists and psychiatrists, especially by that of Ernst Kretschmer. During the Spanish Civil War, he was appointed chief of the Psychiatric Services of Franco's army. In 1938, he promoted the creation of the *Gabinete de Investigaciones Psicológicas* [Psychological Research Bureau] and took on its direct management. The aim of this institution was to find the biopsychic roots of Marxism. Heavily influenced by the work of Krestschmer on the relationship between temperament and corporal constitution, Vallejo Nágera promoted environmental eugenics, which he labelled as "conductist." He considered that biological inheritance did not play a determinant role in shaping human beings; it was subordinated to the environment, which could act either as its trigger or as its corrector. In addition to this, it must be noted that Vallejo Nágera's conception of race was not limited to strictly biological terms, but also involved moral and spiritual terms. It was connected to the notion of '*Hispanidad*' [Hispanicity], which had defining values such as religiosity, patriotism, and moral responsibility. Acting upon the environment, therefore, was paramount to protecting and improving the Hispanic race that, in his view, was menaced.[15]

It is evident that Giménez Canga-Argüelles knew and shared these ideas. In his text for the report, he wrote that, for him, these "human dens" spawned "all the illnesses of the body and rebelliousness of the spirit"[16] ("Informe sobre la situación...," 1941: unpaginated). The short text introducing the 1943 report used a very similar image to this one, stating, in the second of its only five paragraphs, that "the germ of all the rebelliousness of the spirit ferments in these caves"[17] ("Cuevas de Almería," 1943: unpaginated). The idea that living conditions in the caves had an impact on the body and the spirit of their inhabitants — a notion that involved politics and race — was central in the argumentation of these reports. Canga-Argüelles was even more explicit

[15] Among the publications by Vallejo Nágera on this matter we may cite *La asexualización de los psicópatas* (1934), *Eugenesia de la Hispanidad y Regeneración de la Raza* (1937), *Política racial del Nuevo Estado* (1938). There are many academic publications on Vallejo Nágera and eugenics. See, among them: Huertas, 1996; Huertas, 1997; Vinyes, 2002; Campos, 2016; Campos, 2018.

[16] "[T]odas las enfermedades del cuerpo y las rebeldías del espíritu."

[17] "El gérmen [sic] de todas las rebeldías del espíritu, fermenta en estos antros."

about his ideas when he wrote: "We inherit from our ancestors some constant and unalterable characteristics that are those of the species; but the individual's environment provides the social inheritance, which influences the genotype so as to modify it. And it is precisely on this environmental social influence that all improvement of the race is based."[18] ("Informe sobre la situación...," 1941: unpaginated).

In sum, there is no doubt that Vallejo Nágera's conductist eugenics are the framework in which the reports' allusions to the "primitive" and "uncivilised" character and state of the inhabitants of the caves must be understood. When Giménez Canga-Argüelles argues that the "social reconstruction of the Fatherland" by the *Caudillo* should be carried out on the demolished caves, he is closer to describing the future than to using a metaphor ("Informe sobre la situación...," 1941: unpaginated). As changing the environment would transform people, among other things, it would make them less prone to Marxism, which was contrary to the values of the Hispanic race. Thus, despite initial impressions regarding the scarcity of political references in the textual and visual artefacts constituted by the 1941 and 1943 official reports on the caves, the main elements under discussion (within a scientific framework) are (healthy and unhealthy) politics and race.

The *Gabinete de Investigaciones Psicológicas,* led by Vallejo Nágera, carried out psychological and anthropological surveys on a wide range of war prisoners with the aim of defining the psycho-biological features of the so-called Marxist fanaticism. These surveys were published between 1938 and 1939. The subjects of one of these studies were female political prisoners in the jail of Málaga. Rafael Huertas states that this particular report is the most sinister of all because it combines Vallejo Nágera's anti-communism with his ferocious misogyny (Huertas, 1996: 122). The report affirms that women's psychism has points in common with that of children and animals. It is only because their instinctive impulses are socially restrained that women have a gentle, sweet and kind character; without such containment, an unimaginable, cruel instinct awakens (Vallejo Nágera and Martínez, 1939: 194).

Are any of the animal images evoked in the report when describing the caves related to these ideas? Are some of the women living in the caves considered similar to those imprisoned in

[18] "Heredamos de nuestros ascendientes una cantidad de caracteres constantes e inalterables propios de la especie; pero el ambiente del individuo da la herencia social, que influye de tal modo en el genotipo, que llega a modificarlo. Y precisamente en ésta (sic) influencia social del ambiente, se funda todo el mejoramiento de la raza."

Málaga, the place from which many of the republicans arriving in Almería had fled? Indeed, we believe that this might be the case in some of the pages in the report. For instance, one text explains that, because of the conditions they live in, the women in the photograph "have lost all sentiments of delicacy and familiarity,"[19] two qualities the text seems to present as defining the feminine condition the women in the photograph have lost (fig.3).

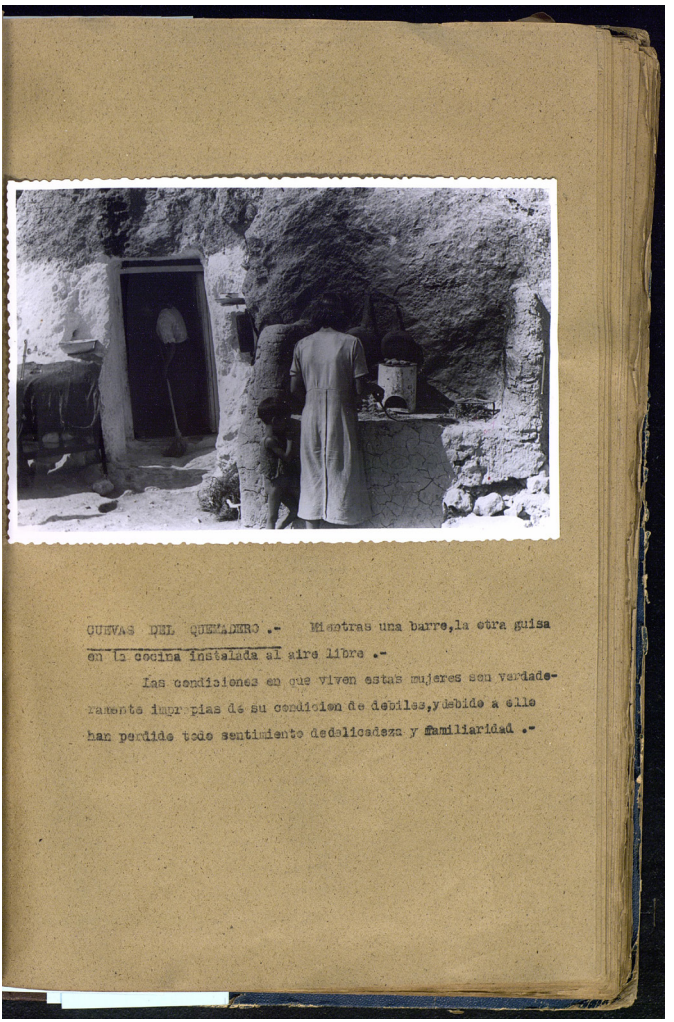

Fig. 3 "CUEVAS DEL QUEMADERO" in "Informe sobre la situación...," 1941, unpaginated. España, Ministerio de Cultura. Archivo General de la Administración. (4)82 F/4174, envelope 6.

[19] "[H]an perdido todo sentimiento de delicadeza y familiaridad."

Words add a new dimension to images by juxtaposing the author's suggestions to those of the photographs. We uphold this view precisely because some images seem to challenge the interpretative framework of the Francoist authorities. Indeed, we think that, sometimes, those photographed show a defiant attitude before the camera, especially in the case of women. They often ignore or even reject the presence of the official expedition, turning their backs on the camera. This is the attitude adopted by one of the women in the photograph we have just mentioned, one of those who did not feel "delicacy and familiarity" ("Informe sobre la situación...," 1941: unpaginated). Actually, one could say that both women in this photograph highlight the extent to which fortitude is compatible with care. To us, they appear rebellious and resilient as they strive to create healthy spaces and contribute to family survival through their work, whilst largely ignoring the photographer and the rest of the group. For us, there is no doubt that, even in their precarious position, they have and use their capacity for agency.

When this happens, the author's effort to undermine the subjects' challenge through the text is blatantly revealed. This is evident in the photograph of a family that sits at the door to their cave (fig. 4). In general terms, one could say the composition of the image is similar to that of any family photograph of the time: at the door of their home, the father presides over the scene, the mother stands at his feet, and their children are around her. This is hardly a photograph taken by surprise. Despite their poverty, the parents pose relaxed and defiant among their children, staring at the camera with an attitude that reaffirms their identity as a family group. Father and mother show the dignity that their own life gives them, no matter how poor it may be. They seem proud of being photographed with their children.

We think it is precisely because this image could potentially promote the viewer's affective identification with it that the text expresses a profound contempt for this family. Using animal images and quotation marks to ironically disqualify the subjects and their relationship, the text refers to how "in this cave, unfit for beasts, lives this 'happy [married] couple' with their six children."[20] Taking

[20] It must be noted that there are ten individuals in the photograph, however the text mentions a couple and their six children, leaving two of the sitters in a sort of limbo. A quite specific and restrictive understanding of the concept of 'family' (that of the nuclear family) is, thus, imposed on the group. This makes the networks of collaboration, care and affection involved in extended and/or elected family invisible. It also (conveniently) forgets young girls' single motherhood and the fact that war and repression had left many children under the responsibility of other family members or friends. Furthermore, perhaps because of their

this further, they are considered as troglodytes, a primitive psychological and developmental state which, in accordance with anthropometry, their factions are said to betray: "From the appearance of the picture and what these ignoble faces reflect, it can be perfectly appreciated that they live in the same conditions as the ancient troglodytes"[21] ("Cuevas de Almería," 1943: unpaginated).

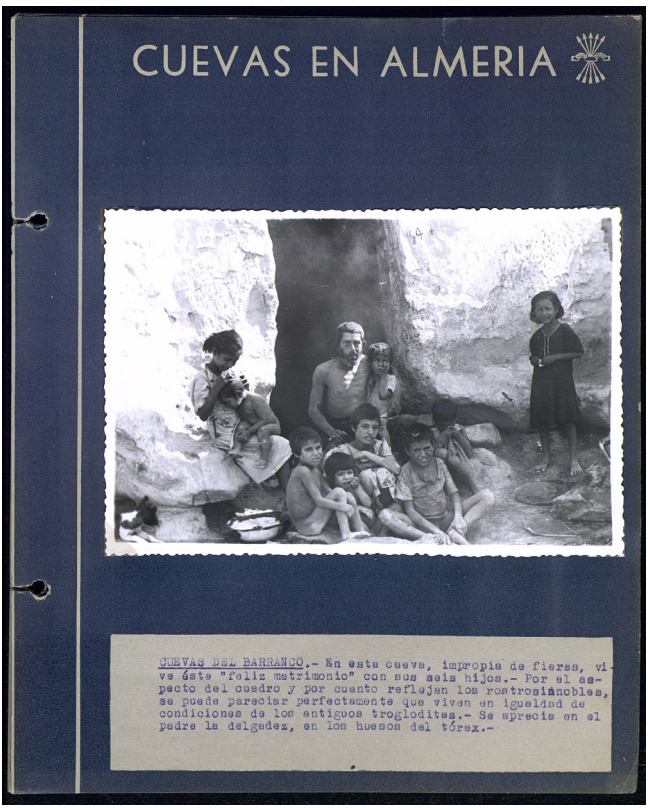

Fig. 4 "CUEVAS DEL BARRANCO" in "Cuevas de Almería," 1943: unpaginated. España, Ministerio de Cultura. Archivo General de la Administración. (4)82 F/4174, envelope 1.

position in the photograph, we assume the report is correctly attributing the role of father to the man in the centre and that the mother is the one with short hair at his feet. But perhaps they are not the biological parents of all/any of the children. They might even not be a couple. Therefore, the texts (and Franco's New Spain) also exert violence on the cave-dwellers and their family structures and bonds in this way.

[21] "[E]n esta cueva, impropia de fieras, vive este 'feliz matrimonio' con sus seis hijos.- Por el aspecto del cuadro y por cuanto reflejan los rostros innobles, se puede apreciar perfectamente que viven en igualdad de condiciones de los antiguos trogloditas."

The contrast between image and text is, indeed, revealing. We believe the texts were added because the images were ambiguous. This was the best way to ensure they conveyed the image the local authorities wished to impress on the reports' intended receiver: the dictator Francisco Franco. This image was that of subjects of a wholly different and distant nature, inferior and prone to degeneration. They were, however, also potentially regenerable and domesticable, provided the necessary conditions were met. The adoption of Almería by Franco was key to this. The local authorities' argument seems to be that, thanks to the adoption, the architecture of the New Spain would replace the caves, causing an impact on its dwellers and contributing decisively to the improvement of the race. In a society led by an aristocratic elite such as the one conceived by Vallejo Nágera, regenerated cave-dwellers would belong to those who could subsequently be led by the *Caudillo*.

Indeed, Almería was adopted by the dictator on March 1st, 1943. It benefited from partial adoption, though. As the cover of the local newspaper informed on March 3rd, 1943, this meant only the "extreme neighbourhoods and suburbs in Almería," that is, the cave-dwellings, would benefit from the decree. The *Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas y Reparaciones* [General Directorate for Devastated Regions and Reparations][22] would oversee an ambitious project consisting of building houses for cave-dwellers in three distinct zones of the city. The periodical *Reconstrucción*, which disseminated the initiatives of this General Directorate, published a profusely illustrated article with elevations and blueprints for the buildings, topographic maps and the budget for the project; a couple of years after that, it also published an article about the new constructions (Cámara 1943, 221-228, Cámara 1945, 277-284). Even though the articles do not mention this, the arches, domes and lattices in the illustrations betray the orientalising inspiration of the project. Why was this so? Perhaps the architects thought such forms would suit the neighbourhood's (African-like) inhabitants better?

Despite the official propaganda promises, in the end, the only part of the project that was built was the Devastated Regions neighbourhood that could house, approximately, 1500 people; this was close to nothing compared to the 18206 people who lived in caves.[23] Only 9,4% of the caves were destroyed

[22] This organism, dependent on the Governance Ministry, was created in 1938 with the aim of controlling and directing the public and private projects for restoring or reconstructing the sites damaged by the Spanish Civil War.

[23] According to the 1941 report, 18206 people lived in the 2520 caves that existed in the city of Almería ("Informe sobre la situación...," 1941).

(Cachorro, 2016: 17). In the rest, their inhabitants continued to live and die. Were they not considered a menace by the authorities any more?

A PROVINCE AND AN AESTHETIC MYTH

The landscape of Almería was among the main sources of inspiration for the *Indaliano* artistic movement. This was especially the case for the landscape formed by the hills and the constructions integrated into them, from the *Alcazaba* (the fortress) built in the times of Al-Andalus, to the humble houses of La Chanca, to the dwellings carved in the rocks.

The *Indaliano* movement was formed by some of the intellectuals who regularly met at *La Granja Balear* and other cafés in the city. Artists, writers, musicians, journalists, doctors, and other individuals in Almería interested in the arts and culture found in these social gatherings a place for discussion. The personality and charisma of the artist Jesús de Perceval were vital in these gatherings, in the foundation of the *Indaliano* movement and in the promotional success of the collective.[24] But so were figures like Celia Viñas (a writer, art critic and brilliant active teacher who transformed Almeria's high school),[25] Juan Cuadrado (painter and archaeologist, who taught at the arts school and held various official posts in Almería, including the direction of the province's archaeology museum) or Luis Úbeda Gorostizaga (art critic). Some very young artists, students of the Almería arts school, also participated in these meetings. Some of them (namely Francisco Alcaraz, Miguel Cantón Checa, Luis Cañadas and Francisco Capulino)[26] had been awarded prizes in the 1946 provincial crafts

[24] Perceval is quite a complex, controversial figure. From a bourgeois family, he was involved in the support to the republican side during the Spanish Civil War but considered a dubious supporter of it, and, thus, incarcerated by this side. He was liberated after the Francoist troops entered in Almería. He was involved in the reconstruction of Almería after the war and was a prominent public intellectual in the cultural arena (Durán, 2015).

[25] Celia Viñas is a very prominent figure in the intellectual milieux of the time in Almería. Discussing her role in the artistic circle, Irene Barreno has studied the sorority relationship between her and the artist Paquita Soriano, one of the women who were part of the *Indaliano*s. Viñas praised Soriano's work and supported her career through talks and texts, and also encouraged her to exhibit in major institutions such as the Villaespesa Library in Almería (Barreno, 2024: 111-114).

[26] Francisco Capulino, known as 'Capuleto' in the artistic world, affirmed in an interview that, apart from Perceval, who was ambiguous, all the other members of the *Indaliano* group came from leftist families. As an example, he

contest, where Perceval had been a member of the jury. They would consider him as their master (Durán, 2015: 23).

As María Dolores Durán has explained, Perceval combined some of the information, findings and theories of the moment to formulate his own theory about the resurgence of the Mediterranean. It resonated with the ideas of Eugeni d'Ors, whom he knew well. There was one main difference, though, for Perceval, Almería was the base of this resurgence: civilisation was supposed to have entered Europe through the region of Almería (the Prehistoric Argar culture was evidence of this), and Christianism in the Iberian Peninsula had also its starting point there, with the Seven Apostolic Men and, especially, Saint Indalecio, patron of Almería (Durán, 1994: 19-28; Durán, 2015: 19-23).

In fact, Saint Indalecio was the inspiration for the name '*Indalo*,' the movement's emblem. As suggested by Juan Cuadrado, this emblem was designed after one of the paintings in the *Los Letreros* cave in Vélez-Blanco. The group created it, named it and successfully popularised it (it soon became the symbol, almost a logo, for the province), thus outlining this territory's role in the development of the arts and connecting prehistory with the State religion, with the people and the popular, as well as with the present.

On the one hand, the *Indalianos*' ideas were a perfect match for the regime's ambitions and project to regenerate Spain. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the *Indalianos* were well aware of the impact the support of those in power (politicians, the Church, the press) could have on the movement. As we will see, a strategic symbiotic relationship was soon established between them.

The *Indalianos* made their first official appearances in Almería in 1946. In 1947, Perceval initiated the movements for a very ambitious plan: exhibiting at the National Modern Art Museum in Madrid. For this, he managed to get the support of important political authorities in Almería and Madrid: Manuel Urbina Carrera

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reminded that Cañadas' father had been executed and that his own father, a member of Izquierda Republicana, could only luckily save his life. In addition to that, he pointed out that Luis Úbeda Gorostizaga, according to him the "true theoretitian of the *Indalianos*," arrived to Almería as a result of being banished because of his participation in the republican militia (Blanco, 1999). The fact that his brother, the lawyer Jesús Úbeda Gorostizaga, briefly held posts associated to *Falange* in *Auxilio Social*, might have been of help to protect Luis Úbeda Gorostizaga (Moya, no publication date). Interestingly, Jesús Úbeda had been the secretary (and, then, successor) of Canga-Argüelles (the doctor responsible for one of the memoirs in the 1941 report on the cave-dwellings) at the Province Delegation of *Auxilio Social* (Rodríguez, 2004: 685).

(the Civil Governor of Almería) and Rodrigo Vivar Téllez (then General Vice-secretary of the Movimiento in Madrid and, as we have seen, former Civil Governor of Almería and Provincial Chief of *Falange*). They provided funding for the *Indalianos*' trip and exhibition in Madrid. In a ritual devised by the group to formalise their connections, recognising those who supported them, Urbina Carrera and Vivar Téllez were both offered the golden *Indalo* insignia. The role of the press was also paramount, especially in the case of Juan Aparicio López (Perceval's friend and Director General of the Press) and Eduardo Molina Fajardo (director of the newspaper *Yugo*).

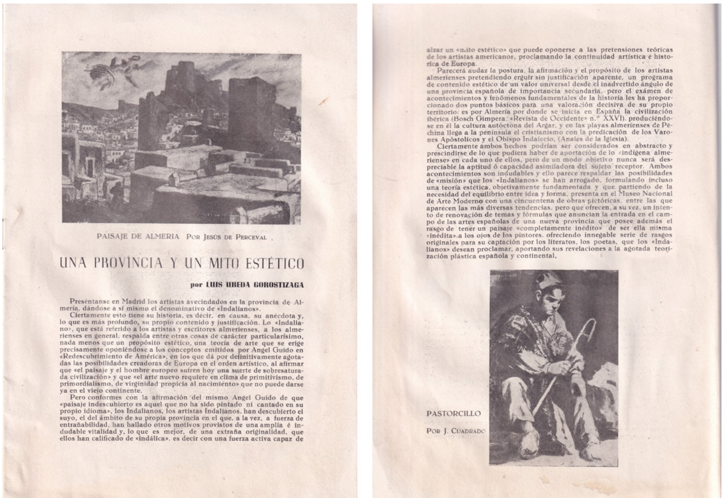
In 1947, exhibitions and conferences were organised in Almería to set the stage for the event in Madrid. Among these was Daniel Vázquez Díaz's exhibition in the new Villaespesa Library. The presence of this renowned painter in Almería and his participation in the selection of pieces for the *Indalianos'* exhibition in the capital contributed to legitimising the movement. The art critic Eugeni d'Ors was another key figure in sanctioning it at the national level. He presided over the opening of the *Indalianos* exhibition in Madrid in 1947. He also selected some artwork by its members for his *VI Salón de los Once* (1948), where he greeted this youth that "comes from prehistory / and goes to eternity"[27] (D'Ors, 1948: 3). Both Vázquez Díaz and d'Ors were named *Indalianos de honor* and were offered the golden *Indalo* insignia.

For the presentation of the *Indaliano* exposition at the Modern Art Museum, the art critic Luis Úbeda Gorostizaga wrote the text entitled "*Una provincia y un mito estético*" [A province and an aesthetic myth] (1947). It was illustrated with the reproduction of a painting by Perceval entitled *Paisaje de Almería* [Almería landscape][28] that represents what we could consider a mythical scene: in the sky of the landscape formed by humble constructions and the *Alcazaba* in Almería, a winged flying figure holds the Indalo and crowns it with a laurel wreath which is also symbolically placed on the landscape itself. Such a representation, in our opinion, puts forward a quite sophisticated argument about the identification between the artists, their chosen symbol and this territory. On the one hand, this specific landscape was the origin of and inspiration for these artists, the *Indaliano* movement and their emblem. On the other hand, the painters were claiming

[27] "[V]iene de la prehistoria / y va a la eternidad".

[28] This painting was been exhibited in 2024 at the Museo Doña Pakyta with the title *La coronación del Indalo (paisaje de La Chanca)* [the coronation of the Indalo (La Chanca landscape)].

their authorial role regarding such a landscape and symbol. On the next page, contrasting with the central role played by geometric forms in Perceval's painting, a *Pastorcillo* [Shepherd] by Cuadrado was reproduced. The traditional aspect and occupation of this young boy, situates him in atemporal coordinates, bringing him closer to the timeless mythical landscape than to a singular contingent present (fig. 5).


PAISAJE DE ALMERIA Por Jesús de Perceval

UNA PROVINCIA Y UN MITO ESTÉTICO

por LUIS UBEDA GOROSTIZAGA

Preséntanse en Madrid los artistas avecindados en la provincia de Almería, dándose a sí mismo el denominativo de «Indalianos».

Ciertamente esto tiene su historia, es decir, en causa, su anécdota y, lo que es más profundo, su propio contenido y justificación. Lo «Indaliano», que está referido a los artistas y escritores almerienses, a los almerienses en general, respalda entre otras cosas de carácter particularísimo, nada menos que un propósito estético, una teoría de arte que se erige precisamente oponiéndose a los conceptos emitidos por Angel Guido en «Redescubrimiento de América», en los que dá por definitivamente agotadas las posibilidades creadoras de Europa en el orden artístico, al afirmar que «el paisaje y el hombre europeo sufren hoy una suerte de sobresaturada civilización» y que «el arte nuevo requiere en clima de primitivismo, de primordialismo, de virginidad propicia al nacimiento» que no puede darse ya en el viejo continente.

Pero conformes con la afirmación del mismo Angel Guido de que «paisaje indescubierto es aquel que no ha sido pintado ni cantado en su propio idioma», los Indalianos, los artistas Indalianos, han descubierto el suyo, el del ámbito de su propia provincia en el que, a la vez, a fuerza de entrañabilidad, han hallado otros motivos provistos de una amplia é indudable vitalidad y, lo que es mejor, de una extraña originalidad, que ellos han calificado de «indálica», es decir con una fuerza activa capaz de alzar un «mito estético» que puede oponerse a las pretensiones teóricas de los artistas americanos, proclamando la continuidad artística é histórica de Europa.

Parecerá audaz la postura, la afirmación y el propósito de los artistas almerienses pretendiendo erguir sin justificación aparente, un programa de contenido estético de un valor universal desde el inadvertido ángulo de una provincia española de importancia secundaria, pero el exámen de acontecimientos y fenómenos fundamentales de la historia les ha proporcionado dos puntos básicos para una valoración decisiva de su propio territorio: es por Almería por donde se inicia en España la civilización ibérica (Bosch Gimpera: «Revista de Occidente» n.º XXVI), produciéndose en él la cultura autóctona del Argar, y en las playas almerienses de Pechina llega a la península el cristianismo con la predicación de los Varones Apóstolicos y el Obispo Indalecio, (Anales de la Iglesia).

Ciertamente ambos hechos podrían ser considerados en abstracto y prescindirse de lo que pudiera haber de aportación de lo «indígena almeriense» en cada uno de ellos, pero de un modo objetivo nunca será despreciable la aptitud ó capacidad asimiladora del sujeto receptor. Ambos acontecimientos son indudables y ello parece respaldar las posibilidades de «misión» que los «Indalianos» se han arrogado, formulando incluso una teoría estética, objetivamente fundamentada y que partiendo de la necesidad del equilibrio entre idea y forma, presenta en el Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno con una cincuentena de obras pictóricas, entre las que aparecen las más diversas tendencias, pero que ofrecen, a su vez, un intento de renovación de temas y fórmulas que anuncian la entrada en el campo de las artes españolas de una nueva provincia que posee además el rasgo de tener un paisaje «completamente inédito» de ser ella misma «inédita» a los ojos de los pintores, ofreciendo innegable serie de rasgos originales para su captación por los literatos, los poetas, que los «Indalianos» desean proclamar, aportando sus revelaciones a la agotada teorización plástica española y continental.

PASTORCILLO
Por J. Cuadrado

Fig. 5 Reproductions of works by Perceval and Cuadrado, and text by Úbeda Gorostizaga in the interior pages of the publication *Exposición de los pintores Indalianos*, Madrid: Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno, 1947. Archive J. M. Martín Robles.

The art critic cited and seemed to agree with Angel Guido, who argued that the cause of Europe's creative exhaustion was its over-saturation with civilisation. He also appeared to share his view concerning how the new art was in need of "primitivism." However, he disagreed with Guido's view that the much-needed renovation could only originate in America. He thought it would come from Southern Spain: the *Indalianos* had found the undiscovered, unrepresented original landscape of Almería, which would serve as a revelation for the drained arts of Spain and Europe.

In 1952, Celia Viñas published the article "*Carta de las regiones: Almería*" [Letter from the regions: Almería] in *Arbor,* one of the main periodicals of the dictatorship's cultural elites. This "letter from the regions" was a fixed section in the periodical aimed at showcasing the diversity of Spain, a country

that could and should not be reduced to Castile. Most of the pages of Viñas' article were descriptions of recent cultural life in Almería. They were preceded by a couple of pages evoking the character of the city and its history. Almería was described as an elusive city, which had two hills with historical ruins whilst being at the same time "flat and white, oriental as no city in Morocco"[29] (Viñas, 1952: 251). Abounding in Almería's connection with Eastern lands, but now paying attention to those more relevant to Christianity, she said travellers affirmed its light was only to be found in the routes of Damascus or of the Holy Land.

She also declared Almería to be totally different to Castilian cities because it almost had no tradition. Viñas considered that its history had been shaped with dramatic, violent interruptions that had destroyed everything, severing one generation from another. The city was described as a place (almost mythically) determined by this particular type of cyclic history, marked by vitality and destruction. One of her paragraphs tellingly started with a line which referred to the city's fate and experience in starting anew: "in Almería one always begins"[30] (Viñas, 1952: 252). However, these words could also allude to the idea that new things must always begin in Almería, thus stressing its leading role.

When Viñas writes that Almería is the city of the *Indalianos*, she immediately tempers her statement by saying the group's existence is the reflection of the city's general interest in the arts. However, the strength of the initial phrase persists: the *Indalianos* had contributed to putting Almería on the map, and ended up becoming a metonymy for the city.

THE RESOURCES AND SPLENDID PLASTIC VISION OF THE PLAIN PEOPLE FROM ALMERÍA

The member of the *Indaliano* movement held as the painter of the Almería landscape was Cantón Checa. When Úbeda Gorostizaga presented Cantón Checa's solo show in Almería in February 1948, he reported that the art critics in Madrid had celebrated his findings. He said the style of Cantón Checa was dominated by colour, the colour of "the unmistakable primitivism of what surrounds the painter, the form and surface purity of the hill turned into a commonplace and familiar thing [...],

[29] "[B]lanca y plana, oriental como ninguna ciudad de Marruecos".

[30] "En Almería siempre se empieza".

the resources and splendid plastic vision of the plain people from Almería who really individualise their dwellings with total naturalness [...] painting the cave entrance and the remains of some ruins with the same painstaking care."[31] (Úbeda Gorostizaga, 1948).

So, in a few years, the degenerate cave inhabitants mentioned in the report commissioned by Vivar Téllez had transformed into plain people with outstanding plastic vision, inspiring the *Indaliano* painters whose exhibition in Madrid was funded by the same Vivar Téllez. Those were but two nearby facets of the same primitivist prism.[32] Such a prism was used to persuade the (powerful) centre that (distant, peripheral) Almería was worth attention. Firstly, to save the city and the province from a racial threat through its adoption by Franco. Regeneration was said to have been made possible through the imposition of state-sponsored orientalising architecture. And secondly, the objective was to present Almería, namely a specific group of intellectuals, as valuable interlocutors and leaders for the (art of the) New Spain because of their privileged connections with the primitive. Their connection with Almería, where, as Viñas had written, "one always begins," could be of use in leading the way at a time when new beginnings were called for.

In a way, the *Indalianos* were taking part in the prelude to the highest point in the debate over postwar primitivism in Spain, with the Escuela de Altamira and the celebration of the *Primera Semana de Arte de Santillana del Mar* [First Week of Art in Santillana del Mar] around 1949. While, as Alex Mitrani has noted, the idea of prehistoric art as a creative model prevailed in the context of Santillana del Mar (Mitrani, 2016: 387). In the case of the *Indalianos*, the notion of the 'primitive' was the result of a less pure amalgamation.

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[31] "[E]l inconfundible primitivismo de lo que circunda al pintor, la pureza de forma y superficie del cerro convertido en cosa cotidiana y familiar [...], los recursos y espléndida visión plástica de las sencillas gentes almerienses que verdaderamente individualizan sus viviendas con absoluta naturalidad [...] enjabelgando [sic] el pórtico de la covacha o el resto de ruina con idéntica minuciosidad."

[32] As Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten note the term 'primitive' does not constitute an essentialist category but exemplifies a relationship of contrast, of binary opposition. In fact, they describe a related set of oppositions which are at work in thoroughly inseparable ways (1996: 217, 231). That is why, in our opinion, the metaphor of the prism (with opposing but inseparable facets, from which one chooses which to privilege when one looks through it) might be a good way to describe how this set is put in use.

Fig. 6 Poster of the *Exposición de los pintores Indalianos*, Madrid: Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno, 1947. Archive J. M. Martín Robles.

An example of this is the poster for their 1947 exhibition in Madrid (fig. 6). It combined the evocative power of the prehistoric in their emblem (the *Indalo*) with the appeal of the popular in the photograph of a *mojaquera* (demonym for a woman from the village of Mojácar). The scarf around her head, her covered mouth, and the ceramic jug she carries on her head, along with the sharp light and shades of the image, speak of the South and exotic differences. Juan Manuel Bonet has wondered if this pictorialist photography, which he compares to those by José Ortiz Echagüe, might have been taken by Perceval (2005: 9). Durán

adds a relevant detail that makes this comparison with the carefully planned photographs by Ortiz Echagüe more relevant: this was not a candid documentary photograph but a staged one. If the archaeologist Cuadrado suggested using the wall paintings of *Los Letreros* cave to design the movement's emblem, it was his daughter who posed dressed as *a mojaquera* (Cuadrado, 2013: 16). All this was part of what we could nowadays consider a branding campaign. In addition to creating the *Indalo,* the *Indalianos* also exploited it, wrapping it in mythical and legendary elements to meet their own image and promotional ends. Indeed, they might have been the ones responsible for painting the emblem on the doors of houses in Mojácar with propaganda aims (Durán, 1994: 27) to feed the legend and strengthen the association between the village, the *mojaqueras*, the *Indalo* (a figure now presented as a magic protective totem used by villagers, thus going beyond the prehistoric and archaeological, binding all of them with popular beliefs and traditions and with folklore), and the movement.

Undoubtedly, the image campaign the *Indalianos* designed was wisely and strategically curated and managed. Art, literature, history, archaeology, philosophy, and folklore were woven into the creation of their discourse and mythology. They were actively and consciously participating in the "invention of tradition" in Almería (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 2012). They were also involved in its promotion through their paintings, as well as through the symbols they created (the *Indalo* is a well-known figure that everybody identifies with Almería) and their visibility in the media at the time. They were considered innovative, provocative, and subversive artists, up to the limits of the understanding and tolerance of those in power.

IN ALMERÍA, ONE ALWAYS BEGINS

As Durán points out, when they represented them, the *Indaliano* artists did not pay attention to the misery of the houses and caves of the hills on top of which the *Alcazaba* stood. They transformed them, interpreting their forms as cubist volumes, working with the contrasts provided by light and bright colours. Even Perceval, who did not represent this landscape often, interpreted it in this formal way in the photographs he made of La Chanca (Durán, 2015: 29-30). As in the case of the 1941 and 1943 reports, the *Indalianos*' contact with such landscapes was self-interested, distant, and temporary. Of course, it did not include conversation

with those inhabiting it. Romanticised, suspended in time, and thus alien to the present, the causes of their subjects' living conditions, their needs and preferences remained invisible, undiscussed. Forms and colours were all that mattered.

It could be said that, by doing this, the *Indalianos* made a crucial political contribution to "solving" the problem of how to relate to those who lived in humble houses and caves in Almería.[33] Architecture and millions of *pesetas* to build new neighbourhoods were not necessary for this. Through painting, the rebellious primitive degenerate cave-dwellers who were said to put the Spanish race at risk were transformed into picturesque popular folk characters. We might easily believe that this might have seemed more than enough to those who, in Almería or elsewhere, kept at a safe distance from them. Thanks to this facet of primitivism the *Indalianos* identified with, the inhabitants of these humble dwellings were folklorised, rendered (like their paintings, the *Indalo,* or the *mojaquera* featured on their exhibition poster) as attractive subjects for observation and visual representation. Whereas their commented photographs in the reports were intended to be disturbing and move to judgement and action, painting had made their quiet contemplation possible, palatable and modern.

In diverse but complementary ways, the (local) political and cultural agents responsible for the reports and for this successful artistic movement, were incorporating the discourses, values and needs of the New Spain. Furthermore, these agents were contributing to imposing them on this territory at a time when, as it has been previously said, new beginnings were called for. Participation in these new beginnings was crucial for these agents if they wanted to carry out their careers in the context of the dictatorship. As it has been evidenced in the previous pages, this involved the interpretation, translation and adaptation of the official discourses, values and needs according to their own. Negotiation and transformation were part of the whole process, and crucial for its success.

We could think that a motto similar to the phrase written by Celia Viñas, "[i]n Almería one always begins" (Viñas, 1952: 252) might have inspired the artists and summarised the objectives

[33] Several decades after the end of the *Indaliano* movement, Capuleto stated that he considered the *Indaliano*s had been manipulated by the dictatorship that was in need for an art movement that could convey an image of freedom (Blanco, 1999). There is no doubt that both sites (the artists and the political authorities supporting them) had their own agendas and objectives to collaborate, and that they both benefited from it.

of the reports which had to do with the regeneration of the race. The "extreme neighbourhoods and suburbs in Almería," those of the cave-dwellings, were the place to start. Filtered through art, which defused any political challenge they might pose by transforming them into what we could consider a mythical, tamed (i.e. not-politically-disrupting-nor-threatening) primitivist authenticity, in addition to granting the *Indalianos* access to the artistic world in Madrid, these (now picturesque) neighbourhoods in Almería would soon be incorporated into the profitable tourist market.

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PEASANT, PRIMITIVE OR NAÏVE ART? SHAPING THE YUGOSLAV ART HISTORY DISCOURSE DURING THE 1950s AND 1960s[1]

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the shifts in the Yugoslav art history discourse on peasant-art that emerged in 1930s Croatia. *Naïve art* as a specific concept was adopted after the Second World War, largely thanks to studies by acclaimed international and Yugoslav authors. By analysing the notions of *peasant*, *primitive,* and *naïve* art in some of the earliest attempts at theorising Croatian naïve art, written by art historians Oto Bihalji-Merin and Grgo Gamulin, this paper aims to re-evaluate how these concepts were formulated, used, and instrumentalised. How were they incorporated into the master narrative of Croatian art history? What was their role in relation to other artistic phenomena of the time and to the cultural policies of socialist Yugoslavia? The chapter also discusses the (intentionally) omitted nuances and specificities of interwar peasant-art, applying methodologies based on Marxist feminist and social art history.

[1] This chapter is developed as a part of the doctoral thesis *The Language of Representation of Women Workers in Croatian and Portuguese Art* supported by FCT scholarship under the reference UI/BD/151176/2021.

INTRODUCTION: THE EMERGENCE OF PEASANT-PAINTING

The production of art history discourse on Croatian naïve art evolved through several phases that were closely tied to socio-political, cultural, and aesthetic shifts. Croatian naïve art, often associated with self-taught artists, rural motifs, and the so-called *authentic* form of expression, gained particular significance within the context of the Croatian and Yugoslav art scenes in the 1950s and 1960s, notably with the founding of the Peasant Art Gallery in Zagreb (1952)[2] and the Gallery of Naïve Art in the village of Hlebine in northern Croatia (1968). Although peasant-art,[3] later considered Croatian naïve art, began to emerge as early as the 1930s, the discourse around it remained relatively underdeveloped within academic circles at the time. Its recognition and popularity increased significantly after the Second World War, particularly as it was featured in international exhibitions (Paris, Brussels, Rome, São Paulo, New York) and underwent the process of institutionalisation – not only in Croatia, but also within the broader cultural space of the new Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.[4] In this chapter, I will examine changes in the art history discourse on peasant-art by analysing the notions of *peasant*, *primitive,* and *naïve* art – how these concepts were formulated, used, and instrumentalised.

In the 1930s, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was an underdeveloped country with 80% of the population working in agriculture and living in difficult conditions. The unresolved agrarian issue, entangled with that of class, was one of the central problems in the then-capitalist society under the dictatorship of King Alexander I Karađorđević (Vukobratović, 2019: 80). That issue was also central to the concerns of the Association of Artists *Zemlja*.[5] This Croatian association, established in 1929 and banned by police

[2] The Croatian Museum of Naïve Art was originally founded under the name Peasant Art Gallery, with the aim of collecting, studying, and exhibiting works by *peasant painters* and *peasant sculptors*, as naïve artists were called at the time. In 1956, the gallery changed its name to the Gallery of Primitive Art, and in 1994 it started to operate under its current name, the Croatian Museum of Naïve Art.

[3] This term refers to a specific phenomenon of peasant-art in 1930s Croatia, which is addressed in this chapter.

[4] The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (second Yugoslavia or socialist Yugoslavia) from 1945 to 1963 bore the name Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia.

[5] Full name in Croatian: Udruženje umjetnika Zemlja – *zemlja* in Croatian means soil, land.

decree in 1935, consisted mostly of academically trained painters, sculptors, and architects. Rather than considering themselves as distinguished artistic personalities, the *Zemlja* artists saw themselves as an artistic collective or *front* (Vuković, 2019: 21). The collective had a manifesto and an elaborate programme that rejected civic and bourgeois art, and approached the institution of art as a multifaceted matrix encompassing production, distribution, and reception. While their subject matter varied, their primary interest revolved around giving a voice to the oppressed in both urban and rural environments. They represented peasants, workers, urban misery, poverty, requisition,[6] as well as the daily life of these marginalised groups.

Already in 1930, only a year after the founding of *Zemlja*, one of the most prominent members and the author of *Zemlja*'s programme, Krsto Hegedušić, established the peasant-painting school in the village of Hlebine, located in Podravina, a region in northern Croatia. Art historian Grgo Gamulin defines this school as an informal group characterised by stylistic and iconological cohesion, as well as by a vertical historical continuity that links different generations (Gamulin, 1997: 505). The first generation of the school consisted of three members: Ivan Generalić (1914-1992), Franjo Mraz (1910-1981), and Mirko Virius (1889-1943), all anonymous rural youths at the time. Hegedušić advised them not to copy religious pictures or postcards, but to paint the world of the countryman, their own village and surroundings. In addition to providing them with the minimum of technical knowledge, he also taught them about theme, form, and substance. Art historian Vladimir Crnković pointed out that Hegedušić's painting thus became the model for the first generation, and underlined that the concept of a *school* has to be understood provisionally since there were no classes, attendees, teachers, or curriculum. It was an unsystematic and occasional forum that lasted a rather short time (Crnković, 2016: 9-10).

Peasant-artists soon started exhibiting alongside *Zemlja* members at the Zagreb Art Pavilion (1931), one of the most prestigious exhibition spaces of that time. Crnković explains that the presentation of artistic works by members of the broadest social strata – specifically, the peasantry – arose not merely from *Zemlja*'s desire to showcase their innate talent, but from an interest in exploring how, and to what extent, "authentic representatives of 'the people'", often lacking formal education, could speak

[6] Requisition is forced or temporary confiscation of property with compensation to individuals or legal entities, usually for wartime purposes.

about themselves and articulate their social conditions through artistic means. He continues:

> This was at one with the familiar Zemlja propositions that 'art and life are one', that contemporary life was 'shot through with social ideas' and that one had to 'live the life of the time' and create in the spirit of it. Finally, it embodied the wish to allow those in the broadest, and lowest, social classes, aware of themselves and their social position, to start consciously working to alter their social and political condition. (Crnković, 2016: 8)

A considerable number of *Zemlja* members were also affiliated with the then-illegal Communist Party of Yugoslavia and were contributing to monthly magazines and literary journals, some of which were published by the Communist Party or its members (Hanaček et al., 2019).[7] This gave rise to the idea of an art that could change and improve the economic, social, and political status of its subjects by revealing contemporary socio-political relations, i.e., the capitalist mode of production, and, to a greater or lesser extent, exposing the internal processes and dynamics through which production and social relations were established and reproduced.

The academic painter Krsto Hegedušić came to the village of Hlebine and said to Ivan Generalić: "Paint the way you see things and feel them; don't copy anyone else" (Gamulin, 1986: 11). Due to his family's economic hardship, Generalić's formal education was limited to just four years of elementary schooling, after which he was forced to leave school to assist with agricultural labour, tending to pigs and cattle. His fellow countrymen, Mraz and Virius, were also hardworking peasants who depicted the hardship and injustice they witnessed at the time. During the Second World War, Mraz joined the partisans, whereas Virius, as a sympathiser of the People's Liberation Movement, was arrested and interned in the Nazi concentration camp at *Sajmište/Zemun* in occupied Belgrade, where he died in 1943 from starvation and abuse (Crnković, 2004: 11). As early as 1932, Mraz severed ties with *Zemlja*; during the war, he distanced himself from the naïve artistic expression, and after the war, he moved to Belgrade and attempted to adopt a more academic style of painting (Gamulin, 1997: 508). Thus, immediately after the end of the war, already in 1946, Generalić became the mentor and

[7] Alongside *Zemlja* members, distinguished writers and left-wing intellectuals were also publishing various articles and reviews, critiques, travelogues that influenced the notion of artistic expression and the way of looking at the role of art in contemporary society, mainly taking inspiration from events from the Soviet Union's cultural sphere, the only communist-led country at the time.

adviser to the second generation of the Hlebine school (Filipović, Gaži, Večenaj, Kovačić, Mehkek). His work became the model for several of his young neighbours in Hlebine, whom he started teaching painting and drawing. Hence, the concept of the school took on a new significance. However, in the mid-1950s, Generalić shifted towards the world of fantasy and symbolism, with a new symbolic use of colour, and painting on larger formats (Crnković, 2016: 13-17). Simultaneously, peasant-art was undergoing a process of institutionalisation. The first major step was the opening of the Peasant Art Gallery in Zagreb (1952), which showcased the works of eleven peasant-artists in a permanent exhibition. How, then, was the art of these three peasant-artists from the first generation of the Hlebine school analysed and theorised after the Second World War in the context of the new socialist Yugoslavia and its evolving cultural policies?

Fig. 1. Ivan Generalić, 1955. Photo: Milan Pavić. © Croatian Museum of Naïve Art, Zagreb, photo archive, inv. no. FOTO-290.

SHAPING OF THE DISCOURSE

There are valuable studies and theses written on the subject of Croatian naïve art and its development; however, they generally either apply a merely philosophical and/or aesthetic approach, or they focus on methodologies such as formal and stylistic analysis. More recent contributions offer a more nuanced

reading, positioning peasant-art in a specific socio-historical context, but also interpreting the earliest attempts at theorising Croatian naïve art through the cultural and political dynamics of the time.[8] I propose to go back to the original texts in order to demonstrate, through a comparative approach, how the notions of *peasant*, *primitive,* and *naïve* art were incorporated into the master narrative of Croatian art history, and to evaluate the role of these writings in relation to other artistic movements of the time and to the cultural policies of socialist Yugoslavia. I will also discuss the (intentionally) omitted layers and specificities of interwar peasant-art, applying methodologies based on Marxist feminist and social art history.

Naïve art as a specific concept was adopted after the Second World War in studies by acclaimed authors such as Anatole Jakovsky and Oto Bihalji-Merin. The latter was an art historian, art critic, curator, and writer of Jewish origin, who became one of the most prominent cultural theorists and administrators in socialist Yugoslavia. Bihalji-Merin (1904-1993) had an exciting life trajectory. He became a member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1924, and of the Communist Party of Germany in 1934. Together with his brother Pavle, he founded *Nolit* in 1928, which later became one of the most important and largest publishing houses in socialist Yugoslavia. In 1938, he wrote *Modern German Art* under the pseudonym Peter Thoene for conspiratorial reasons. The book was published on the occasion of the eponymous exhibition at the New Burlington Gallery in London, as a direct response to the persecution of art under Hitler's campaign against so-called Degenerate Art (*Entartete Kunst*). He was a participant in the Spanish Civil War, and from 1941 to 1945, a prisoner of war in Germany. After the Second World War, the critic wrote extensively about the works of naïve artists. For decades, Bihalji-Merin held a significant reputation in the international art community, evidenced by his membership on the selection committee for the major exhibition *Fifty Years of Modern*

[8] See Karić, Miroslav, and Latinović, Senka (eds.). 2024. *Oto Bihalji-Merin: Morao sam biti prisutan / Oto Bihalji-Merin: I Had to Be Present*. Belgrade: Museum of Contemporary Art; Mance, Ivana. 2019. "Towards the Theory of the Naïve Art – Grgo Gamulin and the Understanding of Modernism". *Artium Quaestiones*, (30), 191-209.; Hanaček, Ivana, Kutleša, Ana, and Vuković, Vesna (eds.). 2019. *Problem umjetnosti kolektiva – slučaj Zemlja.* Zagreb: BLOK; Markotić, Danijela, and Prelog, Petar (eds.). 2019. *Umjetnost i život su jedno: Udruženje umjetnika Zemlja 1929.-1935*. Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori; Zimmermann, Tanja. 2018. "Oto Bihalji-Merin and the Concept of the 'Naïve' in the 1950s. Bridging Socialist Realism and Non-Figurative Art". *Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica* 23/1, 185-198.; Prelog, Petar. 2018. *Hrvatska moderna umjetnost i nacionalni identitet*. Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti.

Art, which was part of the World Exhibition in Brussels in 1958. In this role, he successfully proposed and included participants such as the aforementioned Krsto Hegedušić, academic painter, and Ivan Generalić, peasant-painter.

Another distinguished theorist and critic of his generation, and a central figure in Croatian art history, Grgo Gamulin (1910-1997), was also a key interpreter of modernism in socialist Yugoslavia.[9] Gamulin was an art historian, art critic, and writer who served as the head of the Department of Culture and Arts at the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia from 1945 to 1947. In 1947, he took over the organisation of art history teaching at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, where he taught the history of modern art. Gamulin was a co-founder of the Institute of Art History in Zagreb and its first director (1961-1971). He participated in the establishment of the Croatian Society of Art Historians (1953), and in launching numerous scholarly journals. Gamulin wrote extensively on Croatian naïve art since the early 1960s, trying to theorise this phenomenon systematically. Naïve art, as an anti-academic phenomenon, as Mance explains, offered a counterbalance to Gamulin's modernist sensibility, as he was wary of the abstract art emerging during that period (Mance, 2019: 196).

VIRGIN DETACHMENT FROM THE HISTORY OF ART

In Gamulin's writings, naïve art was treated as a "phenomenon that seemingly disrupted the laws of the historically necessitated advancement of art", thus acting as a transgressive agent within the cultural paradigm of the period (Mance, 2019: 196). Mance further notes that such positioning was only possible through the sociological formula of the *blockade,* explained with the so-called *ab ovo* theory, i.e., due to specific formative conditions and limited exposure to artistic and cultural occurrences of the time, the naïve artists remained in a state of *cognitive isolation* that ultimately preserved the authenticity and originality of their creative expression (Mance, 2019: 199). In Gamulin's words, the

[9] One of the most important figures in Yugoslav art history regarding the writing on naïve art, alongside the aforementioned Oto Bihalji-Merin and Grgo Gamulin, was Mića Bašićević (1921-1987), art historian and critic who was closely involved with the work of the Peasant Art Gallery in Zagreb - initially as consultant, and later as its director and curator (Crnković, 2016: 14). There were numerous art historians who also wrote on the subject during socialist Yugoslavia, such as Josip Depolo, Vladimir Maleković, Boris Kelemen and others.

naïve artist "lives and works in virgin detachment from the history of art, and thus, by his very existence, achieves that spontaneity and originality to which a modern artist aspires, usually in vain, and often through artificial means" (Gamulin, 1999: 102).[10]

Already in his first study, *Towards the Theory of the Naïve Art* (1965),[11] Gamulin differentiates naïve art not only from *professional art* – which he refers to as academic art – but also from popular, folkloric, and amateur art. He identifies *traditionality* and *anonymity* as the main characteristics of popular and folkloric art, linking them to the *collective experience* as opposed to the pursuit of original artistic expression (Gamulin, 1999: 85-86). In contrast, naïve art "does not draw on tradition, but instead begins anew". As a result, it is characterized by *individuality,* a distinct morphological repertoire, and a specific *artistic philosophy.* In order to distinguish naïve from amateur art, he emphasises already in the first sentence of the chapter the importance of separating it from the undifferentiated mass of dilettantes, i.e., amateurs. Although both groups are self-taught, Gamulin sees amateur art as a kind of projection of anxiety and loneliness by these so-called Sunday painters, motivated by the solitary man's resistance to the civilisation of the big city and broken social structures:

> It seems to be (...) an attempt by the individual without social support and without an adequate social function to find or fulfill this function in another way and to assert and confirm himself in the community. I heard or read somewhere that in France, there are around 5,000 amateur painters among railway workers, and it seems to me that in the future – particularly regarding the issue of leisure and 'flexible work hours' – this phenomenon will become increasingly significant, and the blurring of the line between amateur and professional art will soon become a pressing issue. (Gamulin, 1999: 89-90)[12]

While amateur art, for Gamulin, falls below the level of contemporary visual and general culture – essentially below the historical threshold, and only peripherally historical – naïve art, as well as its creator, are entirely *ahistorical*: this is "an artist outside

[10] English translation taken from: Mance, Ivana. 2019. "Towards the Theory of the Naïve Art – Grgo Gamulin and the Understanding of Modernism". *Artium Quaestiones*, (30), 199.

[11] Grgo Gamulin, 'Prema teoriji naivne umjetnosti' (*Towards the Theory of the Naïve Art*), *Kolo* 3/5 (1965), 525-553. Translations are only partially taken from the English version of the same article since it differs somewhat in content from the Croatian original quoted in my chapter: Gamulin, Grgo. 1981. "Toward a Theory of Primitive Art". *Primitive Painting: An Anthology of the World's Naive Painters.* Zagreb: Spektar, 14.

[12] All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

history, just as naïve art in general stands outside the historical trends. It lives in isolation and by isolation. That is the art's basic qualification, its advantage and its limitation" (Gamulin, 1999: 101). He continues by comparing the extrahistoricity of the naïve artistic concept with that of *primitive art*, defining the latter through the *primordial* quality of its morphology and a certain instinctive, original relation to the object. He also underlines "the 'original,' previously unseen nature of its forms, and the absence of any visual – and largely cultural – substrate upon which the artist's talent might ground its impulses" (Gamulin, 1999: 95). Although Gamulin notes that the term *primitive* carries a pejorative connotation and suggests that it should no longer be used to classify naïve art, this does not prevent him from continuing to use *primitive art* to categorise the work of certain "primitive painters and periods in history, as well as in the present day" (Gamulin, 1999: 95). In fact, he advocates for the conceptual detachment of the *naïve* from the category of the *primitive* because the latter is, at most, a fragment of the former.

Furthermore, in his search for a dialectic antithesis to the dominant cultural paradigm, and to support the conceptual validation of naïve art as pre- or anti-modern, Gamulin turns to the closed-circle metaphor:

> The mentality that develops due to this radical narrowing of the register of general culture and familiarity with fine arts acquires various forms of middle-class or peasant consciousness, and it can be reinforced by the social, even by the geographical situation. A very high natural intelligence may be present in the naïve artist, as can clearly be observed in the case of our peasant painters, but this intelligence, even when it later comes into contact with the highest achievements in culture, is no longer capable of shifting the established mental structure into a higher intellectual sphere. It moves in a circle and the experience in fine arts, sometimes acquired by the artist in his work, moves with it. (Gamulin, 1999: 103)

However, Mance argues that Gamulin's demand for the originality of expression reflects a typically modernist position; hence "precisely at the moment when the distinctiveness or declination from academic norms was recognised as the value of originality, naïve art became part of the historic course of art, building on it with its specific contribution" (Mance, 2019: 199). Today, in what could be considered a textbook of national art history, *Croatian Painting of the 20th Century*,[13] in which Gamulin laid out its canon, the reader still encounters a discourse of a similar kind. "At the margins of our history and outside any established artistic

[13] First published in 1987-1988.

current (...) an unexpected spring of art emerged" (Gamulin, 1997: 504) – this is how the chapter on Croatian naïve art begins. The text proceeds to explain its supposed virgin detachment from the history of art, the theory of the *blockade*, and naïve art's relation to *primitivism*. This analysis primarily focuses on the formal and stylistic aspects of works by Generalić, Mraz, Virius, and others, almost completely omitting the socio-historical context in which the first generation of the peasant-painting school in Hlebine emerged.

Fig. 2. Mirko Virius, *Povratak po kiši* (*Return in the Rain*), oil on canvas, 1939
© Croatian Museum of Naïve Art, Zagreb, inv. no. 389.

THE MODERN PRIMITIVES

On the other hand, Yugoslav art historian Oto Bihalji-Merin, who also wrote extensively on naïve art, initially advocated for socialist realism following the Second World War. Naturally, after the Stalin-Tito split in 1948 and Yugoslavia's subsequent exclusion from the Cominform, socialist realism was abandoned as the prevailing artistic canon. At the Third Congress of Yugoslav Writers, held in 1952 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Miroslav Krleža, Vice President of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts and one of the most prominent Yugoslav intellectuals and writers, advocated for a new artistic expression that would resonate

with the entire nation. He urged Yugoslav artists to portray rebellious peasants in the spirit of Reformation-era painters, and identified Krsto Hegedušić, a member of *Zemlja* and founder of the peasant-painting school in Hlebine, as a contemporary role model (Zimmermann, 2018: 190). Krleža interpreted certain medieval cultural phenomena in the Yugoslav territory,[14] as precursors to a socialist Third Way, reflecting cultural and political ideas that evolved independently of both Eastern and Western influences, thus laying the foundation for a new cultural policy (Zimmermann, 2018: 190).

A few years later, Bihalji-Merin introduced a new aesthetic concept of art, grounding its formal characteristics in the same medieval traditions (Bihalji-Merin, 1959b: 32). Within this framework, naïve art, closely tied to popular folklore, was seen not only as the legitimate heir of medieval artistic expression, but also as a testament to an uninterrupted creativity that had continually evolved over centuries. Zimmermann notes that Bihalji-Merin, in his interpretation of naïve art, "thus revived an analogical, mythical image of the world, transgressing borders in time and space" (Zimmermann, 2018: 193). During the 1950s, he edited the multilingual illustrated art magazine *Yugoslavia*, a propaganda publication intended to show Western readers the history, art, and culture of the Yugoslav republics.[15] In 1959, an entire issue was dedicated to naïve art, with a particular focus on examples from Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav version of the issue was titled *Naïve Art*, whereas the English edition was titled *Primitive Art*.

In the same year, he published a lavishly illustrated book in English titled *Modern Primitives: Masters of Naïve Painting,* intended for an international audience. In it, Bihalji-Merin outlined his understanding of the concepts of *primitive*, *folk,* and *naïve* art, essentially dividing them into three different developmental stages. According to him, *primitive* art should refer either to the "images produced by the prehistoric mind", "prelogical art", or "the art of the peoples living under primitive conditions in our own day" (Bihalji-Merin, 1959b: 29). He proceeds to describe these "animistic artists" as religious artisans for whom "art is not an aesthetic but ritual activity", linking them to Byzantine icon painters, "who did not paint a sacred *image* but the sacred essence of the image" (Bihalji-Merin, 1959b: 30). According to

[14] Such as the heretical movement of the Bogomils in Bosnia, the Glagolit culture in succession of the Slavonic apostles Cyril and Method, grave markers in Serbian cemeteries (Zimmermann, 2018: 190).

[15] Along with his wife Liza, Oto Bihalji-Merin co-authored a travel book about socialist Yugoslavia titled *Yugoslavia: A Small Country Between Worlds* (1954).

Bihalji-Merin, when art reaches the next stage and becomes *folk* art, its defining characteristic is the communal spirit that arises from tradition, i.e., from historical continuity. It does not reflect the individual taste, but rather custom and habit (Bihalji-Merin, 1959b: 30). The author further explains: "The peasant artists who carry on a popular tradition are not sorcerers; they are not agents for trafficking with secret powers. Rather, they are the reverent guardians of a well-defined, traditional body of rules governing the art of the community" (Bihalji-Merin, 1959b: 30). By describing *primitive* artists as sorcerers with secret powers, Bihalji-Merin seems to get close to what Hal Foster calls the *primitivist fantasy*, i.e., the *realist assumption* "that the other, usually assumed to be of color, has special access to primary psychic and social processes from which the white subject is somehow blocked" (Foster, 1996: 175).[16]

Regarding the third stage, Bihalji-Merin states that *naïve* art and its creators rarely continue traditional patterns, yet at the same time, they do not take the work of professional artists as their model. The art critic thus affirms the spontaneity and originality of their artistic creation, while also underscoring that naïve artists are largely unconcerned with public appreciation. Interestingly, Bihalji-Merin raises questions about the position of the naïve within modern art, but they are not intended for rhetorical reflection, as he answers them immediately thereafter:

> Do the naïve and self-taught painters constitute a new school, a separate branch of the richly diversified modern search for form? Have the modern primitives played a part in the dramatic development that has led from Fauvism to abstraction?
>
> The naïve painters do not constitute a well-defined current within modern art. Their marvelously simple works occupy a place outside the intellectual debates of professional artists. The true naïve painter creates spontaneously and freely, at the dictates of his own feelings. The originality and poetic immediacy of such work delight by the unconscious sincerity with which private fantasies have been expressed. (Bihalji-Merin, 1959b: 33)

Namely, he seeks to position naïve art outside the modernist tendencies, but applies principles similar to those of Gamulin, albeit using different argumentation. Unlike Gamulin, who argued that originality of expression arises from *cognitive isolation*, or

[16] See also Torgovnick, Marianna. 1990. *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press; Antliff, Mark, and Leighten, Patricia. 2003. "Primitive". *Critical Terms for Art History* (eds. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff), Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press (2nd edition), 217-233.

the so-called *blockade,* and from a "virgin detachment from history of art", Bihalji-Merin ascribes such originality to the artist's feelings and to unconscious sincerity. In addition to that, unlike Gamulin, Bihalji-Merin is aware of the class dimension, as well as the working conditions of peasant-artists, stating that some of them only began painting after they reached a certain age, since "the later years bring the leisure necessary for productive activities", along with holidays, weekends, and vacations that could be devoted to artistic creation (Bihalji-Merin, 1959b: 34).

THE *INVISIBLE* REPRODUCTIVE LABOUR

Generalić would paint only in his spare time – on Sundays, rainy, and winter days when there was less work in the fields. His canvases, as well as scenes on glass,[17] reflected the harsh economic conditions, confiscated livestock, injustices, natural disasters such as floods and fires, and the desperation of peasants; however, he also represented scenes from everyday life in his village, including animals, farming, and festivities. In the painting *In the Kitchen* (1940), Generalić depicted two women, likely a mother and daughter or a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, working in a typical Podravina household.

Fig. 3. Ivan Generalić, *U kuhinji (In the Kitchen)*, tempera on glass, 1940. Photo: Goran Vranić © National Museum of Modern Art, Zagreb, inv. no. MG-1536.

[17] Glass-painting is a distinguished technique of Croatian naïve art.

This is one of the earliest such representations in Croatian modern art (Hanaček, 2019: 71) that reflects reproductive labour in Marxian terms. Women's primary responsibility, in accordance with traditional gender roles, is to feed the numerous members of the extended family household. The painting's narrative reinforces that function exactly: one woman is shown kneading a substantial amount of bread dough in a large wooden trough, while the other is feeding a goose to rapidly fatten it. Around them, on the rammed earth floor, are numerous bowls filled with corn porridge, visually underscoring the large number of mouths to be fed (Hanaček, 2019: 71).

Silvia Federici writes that housework "has been transformed into a natural attribute of our female physique and personality, an internal need, an inspiration supposedly coming from the depth of our female character" (Federici, 2012: 16). Social reproduction theory explains the role of women within broader social and class structures, highlighting their often-overlooked contributions to the capitalist economy through traditional roles in the household as child-bearers and caregivers, and, by extension, providers of unpaid work essential for the reproduction and maintenance of the labour force. As Alva Gotby further explains:

> While the state and capital have always sought to regulate the reproduction of the working class, this [private domestic] sphere of life has often appeared as an entirely private matter. Reproduction has come to appear as non-political in a way that conceals its contradictions and antagonisms. This privatisation obscures the historically specific character of reproduction under capitalism, making current reproductive forms seem natural and desirable. The reproductive arrangement of the nuclear family seems like a personal choice, and yet something that everyone wants. (Gotby, 2023: 46)

There is a fair number of paintings by the first generation of the Hlebine school (Generalić, Mraz, Virius) that, intentionally or not, offer a clear commentary on the status of women within the rural context of the time, where women were predominantly perceived as part of the labour force. Peasants, both men and women, with rugged faces and large, coarse hands, are depicted performing physical labour in the field and, less often, reproductive labour in the household. These scenes are far removed from the pastoral, earthly paradise represented in earlier Croatian academic paintings, which depicted bucolic idylls and a romanticised, imaginary vision of rural life and working peasants. Theorists and interpreters of Croatian naïve art, such as Gamulin and Bihalji-Merin, among others, who vividly discuss its genealogy, characteristics, and topics, completely overlooked

this new subject in Croatian painting, as well as the importance of such representation.

Some of these paintings represent one of the earliest occurrences of a new subject in Croatian art – the hardworking peasant woman as a protagonist of modern painting. Within the framework of "narrative primitiveness" (Bihalji-Merin, 1959b: 33), she is represented as a hardworking, fully clothed woman, sometimes barefoot, with facial and bodily features previously unseen in local art (Hanaček, 2019: 72). Paintings and drawings made by Generalić and Virius in the 1930s, as Hanaček argues, offer a clear commentary on the position of women within the socio-economic framework of the rural village during that historical period (Hanaček, 2019: 71); therefore, they are far from being mythologised narratives of virgin detachment from both history and the history of art.

Women very rarely inherited land; instead, they would either inherit movable property or receive monetary dowries. In such circumstances, as Hanaček further explains, women could only gain recognition within both the family and the broader community through labour: managing agricultural work such as field cultivation, sowing, and harvesting, tending poultry, pigs, and cattle – alongside performing domestic and reproductive labour (Hanaček, 2019: 72).

Fig. 4. Ivan Generalić, *Pralja* (*Washerwoman*), oil on glass, 1936. Photo: Goran Vranić © National Museum of Modern Art, Zagreb, inv. no. MG-2158.

Reproductive labour and its representation were not only perceived as non-political but also remained entirely invisible to Yugoslav art historians and writers of the 1950s and 1960s, a perception that persisted during the subsequent period. As part of a broader strategy to position *naïve art* within contemporary artistic currents, the critics largely stripped it of its socio-political background and context. Taking this further, Hanaček explains that, precisely due to a plethora of complex historical and economic relations, in spite of often being represented in peasant-paintings, there were no women peasant-painters in the first generation of the Hlebine school (Hanaček, 2019: 72).

FINAL REMARKS

Writings and theorisation on Croatian peasant-art in the 1950s and 1960s Yugoslavia are characterised by heterogeneous conceptualisations and interpretations of the impulses behind peasant-artists' work and their position within the art system. At the same time, peasant-art was closely tied to the reality in which it was created – the specific socio-historical context of the 1930s. This does not mean that peasant-art inevitably depicted reality, but it was, to an extent, shaped by it. Hence, some of the paintings of the first generation of the Hlebine school represent the first occurrences of a new subject in Croatian art: the hard-working peasant woman, performing reproductive labour, as a protagonist of modern painting.

As the socio-political context changed, and, consequently, socialist Yugoslavia's relationship with both East and West, so too did the function of art and the dominant cultural currents of the period. What initially emerged as peasant-art, bearing a strong critical and even revolutionary imprint, gradually came to be regarded as naïve art, with strong potential for integration into both local and international modern art. Bihalji-Merin, one of the leading promoters of naïve art from the 1950s onward, sought to relate it to medieval traditions in the region, aiming to demonstrate its continuity and to affirm it as both original and locally rooted. Certain medieval cultural phenomena in the Yugoslav territory were interpreted as precursors to a socialist Third Way, reflecting cultural and political ideas that supposedly evolved independently of both Eastern and Western influences.

Other attempts to theorise this type of art, such as Gamulin's, often emphasise that naïve art developed *outside of* – or in *parallel to* – modernism, and even outside of history itself. By doing

so, Croatian peasant-art from the 1930s became gradually and partially depoliticised, frequently interpreted almost exclusively through a formal-stylistic lens, in an ahistorical manner, especially with regard to its provenance and its content.

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CRIANÇAS, LOUCOS, PRIMITIVOS E MODERNOS
HOW VIRGIN ART SHAPED THE EMERGENCE OF ABSTRACT ART IN BRAZILIAN MODERNISM

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ABSTRACT
As the title of the 1949 conference "Crianças, Loucos, Primitivos e Modernos" suggests, the art of children, psychiatric patients, "primitive" people and modern, especially abstract, artists were closely connected in Brazil's artistic and intellectual thinking of the time. The debates reflect a split between a conservative or figurative modern wing and an innovative or abstract wing. Among the latter, art critic Mário Pedrosa would prove a most fervent advocate of what he termed "virgin art". This paper focuses on the significance of virgin art and how it provided a liberating trigger that, not only for Rio de Janeiro artists but on a national scale, allowed the transgression from a canonically established, figurative conception of art to a new, until then not accepted abstract understanding.

INTRODUCTION

The beginnings of geometric abstract or constructive tendencies in Brazilian art are generally linked with the foundation of several artist groups during the 1950s, like Atelier Abstração and Ruptura in São Paulo or Frente and Neoconcreto in Rio de Janeiro.[1] The dissemination of these tendencies was mainly influenced by Max Bill – his 1951 retrospective and participation at the first biennial in São Paulo.[2] To explain the rapid spread of constructive tendencies in the 1950s, relevant literature further draws upon socio-political and economic factors that came at stake with the end of World War II and of the Brazilian dictatorship in 1945, like increasing democratisation, rapid economic growth and euphoric belief in progress under president Juscelino Kubitschek (Venancio Filho, 2008: 19; Couto, 2004: 46-47; Brito, 1999: 15; Amaral, 1993: 90; Morais, 1990: 45; Pontual, 1987: 259-260; Zanini, 1983: 653).[3] What came to be known as the "Constructive Project in Brazilian Art" ("Projeto construtivo na arte brasileira")[4] fits perfectly into this ideological framework.

The importance of these factors cannot be denied, as they provided a necessary backdrop or political legitimisation for abstract or constructive tendencies to enter the official art canon during the 1950s. Nevertheless, to understand the peculiarities of this development means to recognise its beginnings before. Explicitly referring to the development in Rio de Janeiro, former Frente and Neoconcreto member Lygia Pape insists that already in 1948, artists Ivan Serpa, Almir Mavignier and Abraham Palatnik circled around art critic Mário Pedrosa. Thereby, she hints at two incidents that crucially shaped the emergence of "a certain tropism [...], an intention to geometrise the abstract"

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[1] Cocchiarale & Geiger, 1987; Amaral, 1977; Milliet, 1998 (Atelier Abstração, 1951-1958); Belluzzo, 1998 (Ruptura, 1952-1959); Gullar, 1998 (Frente, 1954-1956); Brito, 1999 (Neoconcreto, 1959-1962).

[2] At this event also other Swiss Concrete artists participated and Bill's *Tripartite Unity* won the price for the best international sculpture (Alberro, 2008: 144; Venancio Filho, 2008: 27-28; Herkenhoff, 2007: 57; Couto, 2004: 57; Brito, 1999: 36; Amaral, 1998: 59; Gullar, 1998: 144; Morais, 1990: 43-44; Zanini, 1983: 648).

[3] To explain geometric abstract tendencies in other Latin American countries, these socio-political and economic factors are frequently mentioned (Alberro, 2008: 144; Amaral, 1993: 86; Morais, 1990: 41; Brett, 1989: 255).

[4] This expression has become a collective term for geometric-abstract movements in Brazil, at least since the retrospective exhibition of the same name in 1977 (Amaral, 1977).

("um certo tropismo [...] uma intenção de geometrizar o abstrato") (Pape, 1987: 153):[5] first, Pedrosa's guiding role and theoretical reflections grounded in perception and educational theories; second, the direct contact with the art of children and psychiatric patients for which, including the art of "primitive" people, Pedrosa coined the term "virgin art" (Herkenhoff, 2007: 55; Pontual, 1987: 231).

This paper focuses on the significance of virgin art for this early stage of geometric abstraction referred to by Lygia Pape. By adopting a theoretical and historical approach, it will be stated how it provided a liberating trigger that, not only for Rio de Janeiro artists but on a national scale, allowed the transgression from a canonically established, figurative conception of art to a new, until then not accepted abstract understanding.

FROM PSYCHIATRY TO THE MUSEUM

In September 1946, Almir Mavignier and Nise da Silveira, a revolutionary psychiatrist influenced by Jungian psychoanalysis, opened a painting studio in the psychiatry Pedro II in Rio de Janeiro district Engenho de Dentro.[6] The then 21-year-old artist eagerly dedicated himself to the direction of the studio. He provided necessary materials, explained their use or proposed topics to the patients but, above all, he granted them enough freedom to develop an independent artistic practice. This corresponded to the main concerns of Nise da Silveira to preserve the unconscious projections as pure as possible for psychoanalytical purposes (Mavignier, 2000: 247). Already at the end of 1946, a first exhibition was organised in the psychiatric space before moving to the Ministério de Educação e Cultura (today Palácio Capanema) at the beginning of the following year. The exhibition was well visited and attracted the attention of journalists and professionals, yet to a minor degree of Brazilian psychoanalysts than of renowned art critics, Mário Pedrosa being one of them (Da Silveira, 1980: 14; Villas Bôas, 2008: 146).

Mário Pedrosa (1900-1981) initiated his critical career as a political activist and propagator of Marxist and Trotskyist ideas in the 1920s and 1930s, being a close follower of the surrealist movement around André Breton and the social-revolutionary art

[5] Unless otherwise noted, translations of quotes are my own.

[6] For the history of the studio and the Museu de Imagens do Inconsciente, which emerged from it in 1952, see Da Silveira (1980); Mello (2000); Mavignier (2010; 2000; 1994).

of Mexican Muralism. In 1933, his first art-critical text was dedicated to the "Social tendencies in the art of Käthe Kollwitz" ("As Tendência Sociais da Arte de Käthe Kollwitz") on the occasion of the artist's exhibition in São Paulo.[7] Forced into exile by the dictatorial regime of the Estado Novo (between 1937 and 1945), he lived and worked in Paris, Washington and New York. There, shortly before returning to Brazil, he visited a retrospective of Alexander Calder at the MoMA. This experience caused a decisive turn in his critical thinking, inspiring the first conceptual outline of what he understood as an ideal, integrally synthetic and universal art (Pedrosa 1944a, 46/49-50): an art freed from any mimetic references and external utility, granting autonomy to the artistic expression, and at the same time, in terms of creation and reception process, in closest connection to life (Arantes 2004, 55-57). Comprising an aesthetic as well as a social utopia, this idea is congruous to European movements like De Stijl, Russian Constructivism or Bauhaus.[8]

Upon his return to Brazil in 1945, Pedrosa became increasingly interested in the psychological and unconscious mechanisms of artistic creation and its universal dimensions. Deeper insights, he hoped to find in what he later termed "virgin art" ("arte virgem") (Pedrosa, 1950): the art of psychiatric patients, children and "primitive" people.

During the first and even more fervently during a second exhibition of the Engenho artists[9] at the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo in 1949, a heated debate was unleashed.[10] Starting with the limits between normality and abnormality, the controversy soon revealed fundamental differences concerning the status of the artist, the artistic process and the work of art. Pedrosa vigorously defended virgin art by arguing that it is not the diploma of a fine arts school that characterises an artist because the unconscious, universal key of artistic creation and alive in every human being, transcends any distinction between normality and abnormality. Concerning the value of the works,

[7] In the same year, this text was published in the magazine *O Homem Livre*, reprinted in Pedrosa (1949a: 7-34).

[8] Pedrosa's synthetic conception of art bears a striking resemblance to Gabo's (1971: 7-9) "constructive idea" of 1937.

[9] Entitled *Nove artistas do Engenho de Dentro* (Nine artists from Engenho de Dentro), this exhibition included works by Adelina (Gomes), Carlos (Pertuis), Emygdio (de Barros), José (surname unknown), Kleber (Leal Pessoa), Lúcio (Noeman), Raphael (Domingues), Vicente (surname unknown) and Wilson (Nascimento) (Vaz, 2017: 119).

[10] In her research, Vaz (2017) found 84 related articles published in local newspapers and magazines.

he clearly states: "The images of the unconscious are a symbolic language, the decoding of which is the challenge and duty of psychiatry. But no one can deny that these images and forms are, beyond all else, harmonious, seductive, dramatic, alive and beautiful; in short: they are in and of themselves real works of art" (Pedrosa, 1947b: 11).[11]

The most damning verdict was passed by artist and professor of the Escola Nacional de Belas Artes, Quirino Campofiorito, in whose opinion the works of the Engenho artists were "[...] mediocre artistic demonstrations which have all the weakness of casually done, improvised, unconscious and deficient works, lacking the intelligence and reason that should be the hallmark of artistic creation [...]" (Campofiorito, 1949: 9). In contrast to Pedrosa, Campofiorit (Vaz, 2017: 109) only accepted the therapeutic value of these works. For being unconscious creations, they should remain strictly confined to psychiatric treatment.

To find an explanation for this rather hostile reaction, it is worthwhile to shortly recall the path modern art in Brazil had taken until then.

IN BETWEEN MODERNITIES

During the 1920s, an overt cosmopolitanism combined with a self-conscious nationalism demanded "modernisation, nationalisation and universalisation" ("modernizar, nacionalizar, unversalizar", Joaquím Enojosa)[12] in all areas of social life. Many artists had been drawn to Paris, where they were actively involved in its cultural life. Through the longing desire for the "other", "exotic", and "primitive" in the multicultural art capital of the time, they experienced a valorisation of their own cultural peculiarities. This triggered the need to define a new, genuinely Brazilian artistic language, comprised of the synthesis of European models (like Expressionism, Fauvism, Cubism or Surrealism) and the return to their own cultural roots (local iconography, content, colour). This synthesis is paradigmatically exemplified by works

[11] "As imagens do inconsciente são apenas uma uma linguagem simbólica que o psiquiatra tem por dever decifrar. Mas ninguem impede que essas imagens e sinais sejam, além do mais, harmoniosas, sedutoras, dramáticas, vivas ou belas enfim constituindo em si verdadeiras obras de arte."

[12] Amaral, 1978: X. The basic nationalist attitude of the entire decade is comprised in the coincidence of the centennial of Brazilian independence, the laying of the cornerstone of Brasilia, and the Semana de Arte Moderna in 1922 (Asbury, 2003: 157-158).

of Tarsila do Amaral or the manifestos "Pau-Brasil" (1924) and "Antropofagia" (1928) by Oswald de Andrade.[13] Once back in their home country, they "[...] were disparagingly classified as 'primitives'" ("[...] nos calificaron con desprecio de 'primitivos' (De Andrade, 1942: 192).

Due to the course of local and global politics – the economic crisis of 1929 and the uprising socialist-oriented Vargas Era in 1930 –, international flows were restrained, and artistic production fell under the content-based primacy of „Brazilian reality" ("realidade brasileira", Antônio Cândido).[14] In his 1942 account, Mário de Andrade described the 1930s in contrast to the destructive impetus of the 1920s, in which the efforts of actualisation, nationalisation and universalisation were limited to elitist circles and stylistic experiments lacked a homogenous line of development, as a constructive period with the double mission of social and artistic construction (De Andrade, 1942: 186, 189-191, 199-200). While this *modernista* generation still had to fight for recognition in the official art canon, they developed a moderate, socially engaged figurative style combined with technical perfection, embodied by Candido Portinari or Emiliano Di Cavalcanti.

In the eyes of an artist like Campofiorito, who had experienced this struggle for the standardisation and professionalisation of modern art first hand, the works of the Engenho artists, spontaneous and unaware of any compositional rules as they were, could probably only appear as ridiculous amateur attempts. However, these works could have posed a serious threat to the self-established tradition (Villas Bôas, 2008: 153), when seen alongside the increasing dissemination of abstract ideas that accompanied the successive foundations of the modern art museums in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (both in 1948), still not to talk about the first biennial (in 1951) (Couto, 2004: 46-47; Zanini, 1983: 642). Ironically, what should have been modern art's long-fought-for victory by way of its institutionalisation, turned out to really threaten or at least temporally suppress its own, figurative *Modernismo*. To name only one example: In March 1949, the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo officially inaugurated with an exhibition about the history of abstract art, with works of international artists like Jean Arp, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Alexander Calder, Robert and Sonia Delaunay, Fernand

[13] De Andrade's manifestos are reprinted in Spanish in Amaral, 1978: 137-150.

[14] A key concept of the 1930s for Brazilian sociologists, for example, Gilberto Freyre (Couto, 2004: 29-30).

Léger, Wassily Kandinsky or Alberto Magnelli. In contrast, the Brazilian participation was reduced to three artists: Cícero Días, Waldemar Cordeiro and Samson Flexor (Degand, 1949).

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Unsurprisingly, like with respect to the Engenho exhibitions, a heated debate was unleashed; this time, between figuration and abstraction.[15] The debate was mainly fueled by the relation between form and content in the work of art: from a figurative viewpoint, dependent on external references, from an abstract viewpoint, only dependent on internal relations between pictorial elements (Degand, 1949: 17-20, 24). Significantly, again, in this debate, Campofiorito and Pedrosa clashed with completely opposed views. Their positioning stands symptomatically for a split between a conservative or figurative modern wing, interested in preserving the self-established tradition while rejecting (new) international influences, and an innovative or abstract wing, longing for renewal and open to the art of children, the psychiatric patients and "primitive" people (Villas Bôas, 2008: 152).

In fact, as the title of a conference held by Sérgio Milliet at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo in 1949 suggests, the art of "Children, Insane, Primitives and Moderns" ("Crianças, Loucos, Primitivos e Modernos"(Sérgio Milliet, 1949: 35) – especially abstract moderns – were closely connected in the artistic and intellectual thinking of the time. Although, the discussion was not a new one.

In 1933, artist Flávio de Carvalho and psychiatrist Osório Cesar organised the exhibition *Mês das Crianças e dos Loucos* (Month of the Children and Insane) with works by patients of the Hospital Psiquiátrico do Juquery in São Paulo. In 1939, de Carvalho moreover starred himself as Brazil's first promoter of abstract art when he took over the curatorial leadership for the second May Salon, including works by national artists along with international, mainly abstract artists (RASM, 1984). These events anticipated the controversy that would occur ten years later with the foundation of the museums of modern art and the biennial. But only then, these manifestations merged and gathered official grounds for

[15] In 1948 France, this debate was also one of the main topics at the first congress of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) in Paris, for example, with the paper "The Problem of Realism and Abstraction in Modern Art" presented by Herbert Read (Kramer-Mallordy, 2015: 8, 10).

the negotiation of an expanded conception of art that would drastically change Brazil's artistic landscape (Amaral, 1998: 49-53).

Returning to the debate in the context of the Engenho exhibition of 1949, critics registered parallels to cave drawings but also to the Fauves or abstract artists like Wassily Kandinsky or Maria Helena Vieira da Silva (Navarra, 1947: 2). Less sympathetic critics made abusive comparisons between schizophrenic and abstract artists: both were seen as alienated beings who could only produce illusory inner worlds that had nothing to do with the immediate, that is, social reality (Amaral, 1984: 242). Due to their supposed autistic nature, their works lacked any humanistic value. For this reason, Di Cavalcanti also categorically rejected the works of abstract artists as being, monstrous visions [...] of mad brains" ("visões monstruosas [...] de cérebros doentios") (Di Cavalcanti, 1949: 47).

VIRGIN ART – UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Given such wanton misunderstandings, Pedrosa used the debate between art and madness for publicly announce the essentiality to break away from a traditional understanding of art, not necessarily figurative but merely mimetic and strictly subjugated to formal rules. For it was this understanding that blocked the comprehension of virgin and abstract art alike (Pedrosa, 1947c: 144).[16] In natural disregard of any artistic conventions, virgin art was therefore predestined to serve as a liberating trigger for a new, revised and expanded understanding of art.

Primarily interested in the psychological dimensions, Pedrosa perceived in these works "The Vital Need for Art" (Arte, Necessidade Vital), so the title of his conference held at the end of the Engenho exhibition in 1947 (Pedrosa, 1947c). In this text, astonishing parallels to concepts like the "artistic will" (*Kunstwollen*) from Alois Riegel, the "will to form" (*Wille zur Form*) from Wilhelm Worringer or the "inner need" (*innere Notwendigkeit*) from Wassily Kandinsky can be found. But instead of quoting them, Pedrosa bases his argument on the „need of expression" ("necessidade de expressão"), a notion borrowed from educational and behavioural psychology, which presumes an innate drive to exteriorise subjective feelings on an objective level (Pedrosa, 1947c: 156). This need to communicate

[16] See also Pedrosa, 1952: 229-230; 1973: 283.

would manifest itself more urgently if, as assumed in children or psychiatric patients, the intellect is suppressed by unconscious mechanisms. In some cases, pictorial expression may even be the last resort to actually communicate with the outside world; thus, the creative process reveals itself as a "truly vital need" ("verdadeira necessidade vital") (Pedrosa, 1947c: 163).

Comparable to the fascination virgin manifestations of art exerted on European artists since Cézanne, Gauguin, Matisse or Picasso, Pedrosa recognised the purity of artistic inspiration most powerfully alive in them. Mainly driven by unconscious mechanisms like feeling and intuition, the critic was convinced that these very mechanisms must be the mode of knowledge proper to art.[17] This "affective-expressive knowledge" ("conhecimento afetivo-expressivo") (Pedrosa, 1951b: 76) does not correspond to the faculties of rational or scientific thinking. Therefore, it would be acted out most effectively and universally if the artistic process is freed from external relations, intellectual and visible alike. For Pedrosa, virgin artists unconsciously and intuitively carry this affective knowledge about universal abstract principles or "laws of cosmic creation" ("leis da criação cósmica"), such as light, colour, weight, rhythm, form, movement or proportion, which structure the world and our perception of it and would be transferred and objectified in the work of art (Pedrosa: 1947c: 164).

In his 1949 doctoral thesis, he elaborated the term "affectivity" as proof for the autonomy of forms in the work of art; this time, drawing on Gestalt-principles,[18] especially on Max Wertheimer's principle of "good form."[19] The conclusion of the thesis reads as follows:

> Elementary geometric shapes also have the power to affect us, to prescribe attitudes. The process of perception is already an act of creation. Perception, in its fundamental organisation, obeys the same laws of good form that guide the world and the work of art. If we want to discover the secret of a Greek statue or a fresco by Cimabue, our

[17] Arguing against the imitation of nature and for an unconscious and intuitive source of artistic inspiration, Pedrosa cites Lhote, Baudelaire, Braque, Gauguin and van Gogh (Pedrosa, 1947c: 149-150, 152-153).

[18] Pedrosa first came into contact with Gestalt theory during his studies in Berlin (1927-1929) (Herkenhoff, 2007: 55; Arantes, 2004: 73).

[19] A "good form" is a clearly delimited, harmonious and simple shape, which, in accordance with the figure-ground principle, is perceived as a figure or foreground in front of a complex structure, while all other figures are perceived as background. Another principle, fundamental for Pedrosa, is the rule of supersummativity, according to which the whole is always more than the mere sum of its parts (Wertheimer, 1938/1999: 71-88).

> practical or scientific knowledge, instead of helping us, can become an obstacle. These things speak for themselves, because every form is a sensitised field. It is charged with affectivity (Pedrosa, 1949c: 82-83).[20]

At this point, the critic had found sufficient evidence that affectivity had to be the mode of cognition proper to art, understood as an autonomous system with inherent possibilities for human communication taking place on a deeper, more universal and democratic level – "from soul to soul" ("de alma para alma") (Pedrosa, 1947b: 162).

In this system, his conception of an ideal, synthetic art was completed, in which not only the differentiation between abstract and figurative art or form and content became obsolete, but also feeling and order or intuition and intellect are merged in an integral simultaneity (Pedrosa, 1949d: 210-212). There, at the core of his utopian thinking, Pedrosa suspected art's immediate social and educational potential. In his conviction, the intuitive experience with universal or abstract principles through artistic education would lead to a harmonious development and organisation of the human senses and feelings (Pedrosa, 1947c: 160). The truly "educational power of art" ("a força educatora da arte"), then, not primarily resides in training artists but conscious individuals with sharpened perceptions and awakened minds (Pedrosa: 1947a: 222), not easily corruptible by political ideologies – having in mind the recent fascist and dictatorial past in Europe as well as in Brazil (Pedrosa, 1951a: 181-182).

The conviction that the artistic education of children could be seminal for the development of a healthy society bears resemblance to Herbert Read's *Education through Art* (1943). After the exhibition of children's art organised by the British Council and curated by Read, this book became a main orientation for children's art schools that revolutionised the pedagogical system in Brazil at this time (Osinski, 2019: 17-18). Like Augusto Rodrigues, founder of the Escolinha de Arte do Brasil, Ivan Serpa integrated these ideas in his art classes for children from 1947 onwards and when he mounted the first free studio at the Museu de Arte

[20] "Formas geométricas assim elementares são dotadas também desse poder de nos afetar, de nos ditar atitudes. O ato de perceber é já um ato de criação. O ato de perceber é já um ato de criação. A forma percepcional obedece, no rudimentarismo de sua organização, às mesmas leis da boa forma que regem o mundo e a obra de arte. Para penetrarmos o segredo de uma estátua grega ou um afresco de Cimabue, os nossos conhecimentos práticos ou científicos podem, ao invés de nos ajudar, nos servir de obstáculo. Aquelas coisas falam por si mesmas, pois toda forma é um campo sensibilizado. Está carregada de afetividade."

Moderna de Rio de Janeiro (Pedrosa, 1973: 285). In his teaching methods, he always gave priority to absolute creative freedom by fostering the children's intuitive comprehension of materials and form-finding processes.[21]

ABSTRACT ARTISTS ARE MODERN PRIMITIVES

Still searching for proof of the exact functioning of the cognitive system of art, in 1951, Pedrosa again picked up the affective knowledge, which, in proximity to Jung's archetypes, he also calls "physiognomic knowledge" ("conhecimento fisiognómico"), the natural thinking mode of "primitive" people.[22] On this occasion, he additionally locates his theoretical approach in a synthesis of outer and inner explanatory models, exemplified by Roger Fry's primacy of form and André Breton's primacy of inspiration (Pedrosa, 1951b: 68).

On practical grounds, this synthetic approach was excellently achieved by Alexander Calder, based on his simultaneous inspiration in Miró and Mondrian (Pedrosa, 1944b: 136), by submitting the creative process to an "unconscious self-control" (Pedrosa, 1948: 143). Calder's synthesis of Surrealism and Abstraction included rational, constructivist principles alongside irrational, playful, unpredictable moments to stimulate the viewer's imagination, for example, in his Mobiles. As a result, Calder transcended the strict limitations of constructive art, and overthrew the borders between intuition and intellect, feeling and order, irrationality and rationality (Pedrosa, 1944b: 129-130).

Finally, this evidenced a possible integration of science or technology into art without the art becoming automatically intellectualised (Pedrosa, 1953a: 204). According to Pedrosa, abstract artists were "modern primitives" ("primitivos modernos"), who used a naïve vision to capture all facets of a technologically and scientifically advanced society (Pedrosa, 1953b: 214).[23] Fundamentally,

[21] Serpa cited in Ferreira, 2004: 49. For further details about Serpa's teaching methods, see Pedrosa (1954).

[22] An animistic vision, with which even inanimate things in the environment are perceived as animate (Pedrosa, 1951b: 74). Pedrosa takes this concept from Heinz Werner's *Psicologia Evolutiva* (1948) (Pedrosa, 1951b: 70-79).

[23] This view parallels with Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagy concept, claiming the return not of a "primitive savage" but of a "technicized savage". At the end of the 1940s, Pedrosa considered this synthesis realized in the abstract Cícero Dias (Lima, 2002: 190).

the artist's main task relies in a present- and future-oriented actualisation of the human perception: "[..] the creative impulse and the means of expression of the artist must be immersed in the excellent means of modern technology, which has created new materials and new objects, freed colours from the objective support, invented new forms and opened new perspectives for the human imagination and vision" (Pedrosa, 1951a: 184).[24]

CONCLUSION

Within these ideas, the circle between the three artists and the theorist closed. They regularly gathered at the Engenho studio, Serpa's student workshop or Pedrosa's home, and invited other artists, critics, and intellectuals (Osorio, 2010: 19; Villas Bôas, 2008: 159-160; Siqueira, 2003: 160-161).[25] This close interaction produced a special atmosphere of mutual inspiration, an "experimental space" (Osorio, 2010: 19), or "conversion space" (Villas Bôas, 2008: 158), that not only fostered the transformation of patients to artists but also of figurative to abstract artists.

Deeply influenced by their experiences with the art of psychiatric patients and children, who helped them discover artistic intuition as the main source of creativity, the three artists in Rio de Janeiro pursued an autonomous, communicative and universal abstract language. In this new language, intuition and intellect, feeling and order, irrationality, and rationality should constitute an integral whole.

Occasionally, this type of geometric abstraction has been called "intuitive" or "sensitive geometry" ("geometria sensível") (Pedrosa, 1958: 114). With the latter, 44 years ago, the first attempt was made to conceptualise geometric-abstract tendencies in Latin America.[26] But a synthetic understanding of geometric-abstract, constructive or concrete art was also the concern of numerous European artists, like Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Kazimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, Jean Arp, and even of Max

[24] "[...] o impulso criador e os meios de expressão do artista têm de mergulhar nos formidáveis recursos da tecnologia moderna, que criou novos materiáis e novos objetos, libertou as cores do soporte objetivo, insinuounovas formas e abriu novas perspectivas à imaginação e à visão humanas".

[25] Compare also the testimonies of Mavignier (2010: 209) and Palatnik (1987: 125-126).

[26] This was the title of an exhibition curated by Roberto Pontual in 1978 that brought together geometric-abstract tendencies from all over Latin America (Herkenhoff, 2007: 57).

Bill. It may be concluded, precisely for this reason, that their approaches awakened the interest of the three Brazilian artists and their theorist.

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THIS BOOK RESULTS FROM, AND EXPANDS WITH FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS, THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE *THE TROUBLE WITH PRIMITIVISM: USES OF THE PAST IN IBERIAN AND TRANSATLANTIC MODERNISMS*, WHICH CLOSED THE PROJECT *IBERIAN MODERNISMS AND THE PRIMITIVIST IMAGINARY* (PIM) (PTDC/ART-HIS/29837/2017) AND THAT TOOK PLACE AT NOVA FCSH, LISBON, ON 26-28 MAY 2022. A WIDE RANGE OF AUTHORS DISCUSS THE USES OF THE PAST AND THE MYTHS OF ORIGINS IMPLICATED IN THE TROUBLESOME CONCEPT OF 'PRIMITIVISM' AND ITS OPERABILITY IN SPANISH, PORTUGUESE, LATIN AMERICAN AND OTHER SEMI-PERIPHERAL CONTEXTS.

KEYWORDS: PRIMITIVISM, IMPERIALISM, PERIPHERY, BELATEDNESS, VISUAL CULTURE, POLITICS, PROPAGANDA

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